

CINEMA

AUGUST 1992 VOL 10 NO 85

Papers

THIS REPORT

CANNES '92

INCLUDING

AUSTRALIAN FILMS AT CANNES
DAVID LYNCH PRESS CONFERENCE
VITALI KANIEVSKI INTERVIEW
GIANNI AMELIO INTERVIEW

PLUS

CHRISTOPHER LAMBERT IN 'FORTRESS'
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TEEN MOVIES DEBATE

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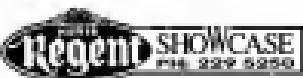
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Newsreel

JOHN GASCOIGNE

"Messages aren't what I want to do" runs the old joke. But in Australia it continues, the "good old days" when big business Reischmanns passed as they used to be.

Events both important and trivial mostly in the pre-television age (before 1950), encompassing all manner of local items or Greater Union pictures in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. And that made events in keeping up memorable moments of the 20th century – such as troops arriving for the war in Korea and the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and David Broadhurst telling the Roma farceur another round.

It is the result of a \$4 million project named Operation Maxrew (it could as well have been named "Everything Old is New Again") after Peter Allen's movie. The restoration project has been sponsored by Greater Union and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

Kilometres of filmstock retain and provide the most repeated copied and given value, especially in backrooms of the National Film and Sound Archives Housing in Canberra. The original negatives in catalogues of 4,000 reels each cost about \$1000 apiece and were strategy documents, replicated and copied again by four film technicians before being copied on to suitable film stock and videotape.

Alfred Vee, who gave way to the more durable acetate in 1965, breaks down to a powder unless storage conditions are perfect. They rarely are, so much of Australia's early measured footage has been lost forever. Project manager Andrew Vee says:

Before the project was launched, many of the major news organisations were actively throwing away. No one took them seriously. It encouraged an embodiment. Yet these materials were much of our national heritage. We're in very short at hazard. About 4,000 reels have survived from 1911 to 1950. Fewer negatives were made per year, then until 1975, the output dropped to about 80 negatives a year. Now people bring in material – in some cases more than 50 years after the first recording.

Operation Maxrew was launched in Sydney and Melbourne with Government's coverage of events in 1958 including aspects of desecration trials in Sydney (including the "Bell and Taylor" of wheelchair racing Norman Hartnell), the Queen's diamond jubilee, introducing the Nobel laureate Max Teller, and the finding in New South Wales of the 20-year-old missing aircraft "Southern Cross".

"The negatives have generous thermal-lag in Sydney and Melbourne," says Vee. "There is obviously a strong element of nostalgia for older audiences, but younger ones too are enthralled by what absorbed their parents and grandparents."



The researchers began their daily screening in Sydney and Melbourne last September. In March Vee based the Canberra offices of the Greater Union Organisation on the shores of Lake Burley, along the riverwalk. And making the following block-and-white negatives began playing to nostalgic receptive audiences in Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane.

An air of apprehension accompanied the experimental release of the newsreels in the two main cities; their new purpose was not in consumers' consciousness. But, working with an international distributor for distributing classic classics, Sydney's Pic Centre, with its later shorts, raised its spot for a second investment tag to be made available for daily screening.

Our Sydney audience, particularly the younger element, have been greatly enthused about the newsreels," says Stephen Ureka, Pic's buyer and programme manager. John Polson, Pic's producer of stamping and yelling, is reminiscent of Tom and Jerry dogs. He's assumed all social functions opening there. (Right: pic's successful self-taught editor.)

Ureka says:



We are showing them in no particular order. This year we've started with Harry Bassett and his 1930 Australian Day pageant. Next comes a Newman's marriage, won by all Van Morrison, welcoming a new rail engine named Harry Grey, and an inevitable turn into Robinson Crusoë, showing mutineers and straight searching of the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The summer tag is on. One of Greater Union's one-of-a-kind features is its most unusual and solid core repertoire, and next to the great rock music documentary, who could pass up permanent seating on the real Melbourne rollercoaster?

When I went to the theatre, the kangaroo never crossed the opening line, survived in excess of 50 years ago. The eco-precautions which dictated and carry commentary seems, from editorial news, probably less so at the time – 1958 – when the black-and-white screen was riveting "local news item pictures".

One of Australia's last serials was the Sydney-produced Australian Gazette, which ran from 1919 to the mid-20s, a weekly 16mm news of the day feature of about 10 minutes. Most of this footage is still held by the Archives, whose producer was the founder of the pioneer Ken Hall's Circumlocution Productions. A company was founded by Union Thackeray from the Greater Union Organisation.

In 1931, Stuart Doyle, managing director of Union Thackeray, joined Hall with a view to location for Commonwealth film studios. On Our Sister's Wedding How about we make our own pictures?"

Back in Sydney, Hall directed the first Commonwealth News. It reflected in growing popularity in response to Australian Monogram News, a product of the U.S. company Fox FilmCorporation, which had launched its newsreel two years earlier. It was the parent company 20th Century Fox, and International Pictures bought in 1938. (Later, Fox donated 200 newsreels to Operation Maxrew.)

Producing weekly bulletins, each four to seven items, for 30 years, the Hall newsreels housed compete to be known somewhere the news of the day. Their battle royal – displaced by 1939 Indian film, *Mahabharat* – ended 1958, 1970 when the great reels amalgamated in a last-batch studio against the new challenge, videotape. The last reel? It was a phony war, the audience (star)!

Each newsreel took a series of shooting and editing, as the name Commonwealth Newsreels Productions showed out documenting other than their ongoing news in the first place before it folded.

New Article Vee thinks justify a model will lead in comparison of the better newsreels to VHS-social cassette: "Hopefully it'll become invaluable to the public, not just be stuck for researchers and historians."

THE 1992 AFI AWARD NOMINATIONS

BEST FILM OF THE YEAR

Black Robe (Robert Lantos, Ken Billman, Stephen Rappaport)
Romper Stomper (Jan Pringle, Daniel Schatz)
Sleighty Business (Trevor Mays)
The Last Days of Ober Holst (Jens Chagerup)

BEST FILM AWARDS

PERFECT PERFORMANCE IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:
Black Robe
Deathray Wright (Romper Stomper)
Blue Lullabies (Sleighty Business)
Gillian Armstrong (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

OUTSTANDING ACTOR

BEST MALE ACTOR:
Black Robe
Craig T. Nelson (*Sleighty Business*)
Eric Lomax (*Blue Lullabies*)
John Goodman (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN

ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE:
Minerola Girl (*Deathray Wright*)
Clare Corbett (*Blue Lullabies*)
Tina Majorino (*Sleighty Business*)
Lisa Hartman (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:
Black Robe
Russell Crowe (*Romper Stomper*)
Paul McCrane (*Blue Lullabies*)
Siouxsie Medico (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:
Eric Lomax (*Blue Lullabies*)
John Goodman (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

FOR FPC PUBLISHED DECISIONS
SEE PAGE 117

FBI THOMSON

Miranda Otto (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

TRAVIS BICKLE AWARD FOR BEST

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:
August Schellenberg (*Black Robe*)
Daniel Pollock (*Romper Stomper*)
Barry Otto (*Sleighty Business*)
Bob Hanen (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

SARAH LUCILLE BROWN FOR BEST

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:
Peter James (*Blue Lullabies*)
James Berlin (*Deathray Wright*)
Steve Mason (*Sleighty Business*)
Debraj Banerjee (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

SPECTRUM FILM AWARDS FOR BEST EDITING

The McBurnies (*Black Robe*)
Bill Murphy (*Romper Stomper*)
Jill Headon (*Sleighty Business*)
Nicholas Baumgart (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

ENTERTAINERS UNION AWARDS

Deborah Conway (*Blue Lullabies*)
Felicity Fox (*Deathray Wright*)
John Gammie White (*Romper Stomper*)
Paul Giamatti (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

FILM WITH AUSTRALIA AWARD FOR

BEST ACHIEVEMENT IN PRODUCTION DESIGN:
David Michalek (*Love in Limbo*)
Steven James Evans (*Romper Stomper*)
Carmelita Martin (*Sleighty Business*)
Janet Patterson (*The Last Days of Ober Holst*)

ADRIAN VERNON AWARDS FOR

John Gammie White (*Romper Stomper*)
Rebecca Agius (*Black Robe*)
Charles Patterson (*Love in Limbo*)
Aidan Sampson (*Romper Stomper*)
Angus Macfadyen (*Sleighty Business*)

ENTERTAINERS UNION AWARDS

BEST ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE:
Philippa Coulthard (*Instrument Over the Anvil*)
 On recommendation by the Actors' Juno to the
 AFI Board of Directors

AFI'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY FEATURE FILM NOMINATIONS

BEST DOCUMENTARY

Black History (Robin Ardern) (*Buy Country*)
Gold & Gold (Gordon Trapp) (*As Australian Comedy*)
My Name is Dennis (to be an Agitator) (Gerry Delaney)
The Shepherd and the Cross (Chris Hilton)

BEST SHORT FILM

Scenes of the City (Kathy Lintley)
Sheila's Life (Angela Herd)
The Angelina (Jane Field) Anthony Lacy)
The Descendants (Andrea Schutte)

BEST DRAMA FILM

My Tiger's Eyes (Tack Twiss)
See You Next Weekend (John Irvin)
The Art of Drowning (Lorraine O'Grady)
The Hand to Hold (Michael Eklund)
Goodbye to All (Andrea Schutte)

KODAK NON FEATURE SPECIAL

AFI'S 100TH AWARDS
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Conductor (Julia Rose Pocock))
Sky Winters (*In Acting* (*For His and Her*)))

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SOFT & DARKLY



Cannes 1992

Despite the fine efforts of other festivals, Cannes remains without doubt the international film event. There is a real buzz about Cannes when May draws near; and more rumours, deals and stories emanate from it than anywhere else, let alone many of the films that will grab critical attention around the world during the next year or so.

THE PRIZES

PALMIE D'OR

Den Gode Film (The Best Intention, Boile August, Sweden)

PRIX DU MEILLEUR FILM DU FESTIVAL DE CANNES

James Ivory for *Mouchoir Bleu* (U.S.)

SHARE PRIX DU JURY

Cannes Award for
Il Bambino di Venezia (The Stolen Children, Italy)

INTERPRETATION FILMÉE

Perdita Weeks-August for her rôle in
Le Best Friend

INTERPRETATION MAGAZINE

The Redlist for his rôle in
The Player (U.S.)

PRIX DU COURT

El Sol del Montaña (The Quiet Tree Sun, Winter Solstice, Spain)
and

Semiotikus, Jim (An Independent Life, Vitali Kostylev, Russia)

PRIX DU JEUN

Robert Altman for *The Player*

PALMIE DU MEILLEUR SCENARISTE

David O. Russell for *Good Will Hunting*

PRIX DU JURY DU COURRIER-BLÉNAIS

La Session

(Manuel Pinto, Belgium)

GARDINA D'OR

Mac (John Tortorella, U.S.)

TECHNIQUE

Fernando Solanas for

El Playa (The Voyage, Argentina).

Course, to those interested only in American mainstream cinema, Cannes may seem a bit off-centre, some Australian newspapers, for example, relishing their rôle as the forefront of an indigenous anti-corporation think-the-whole-thing-over movement. In fact, one doubts if any other country with a serious press corps would let Cannes down Australia. The *Times* London would never think otherwise being properly represented, nor would *Le Monde* (or *Spiegel* but *The Age*, *The Australian*, et al), bypass the event, nor even holding no tally for their Australian film festival.¹ (Please, then, for the pioneering efforts of *SBS*' *The Movie Show*.)

This disaster is by the fourth estate is all the more puzzling if one properly appreciates the importance of Cannes to the Australian film industry. Many of Australia's best directors owe an enormous amount to having been discovered at Cannes (and by Pierre Rissient), be they auteur *Carpentier*, *Fred Schepisi* or *Gillian Armstrong*. Cannes has been, and still is, the principal launching pad for much Australian cinema, especially in these days of lower-budget, less Americanised films.

Of course, very few Australian films make it to an official selection, which is cause for real concern. One should also note the increasing importance of the link between Cannes selection and healthy sales. This year, it was reported that every film (not one) which did solid business in the market had been selected in an official event. This means the chances of Australian films just going to the market and making money are lessening; the films must first be good enough for a festival spot.

One organization which a millennia of Cannes' importation and is doing all it can to turn the industry around in the sales marketplace, is the Australian Film Commission's marketing division. Without the AFC, many an Australian, overviewed by the bustle of Cannes, would never emerge from the relative seclusion of a hotel on Le Petit Carlton bar. Fortunately, the AFC has so successfully held the interest of various producers over the years that today there is a growing number of Australians who know how to work Cannes for all its worth. It is increasingly common to see Australian filmmakers leave for day or two and negotiate a deal. That independence and confidence in a world marketplace is essential for a continuing local industry, and it is clear that the AFC's marketing work is paying off!

As most readers now know, the Australian film which did well at Cannes this year was Ben Lutjens' *Brookhaven*. Pierre Rissient had actually suggested it be programmed on a midnight

1. *Salon officiel* report from the Cannes jury: JOHN HEDGES, ALICE COOPER, ROBIN LEE CHAPMAN, PHILIPPE BOUAFIA AND PETERSON ROBERT REED. PREVIOUS YEARS' WINNERS AND EXPERTS REMAINED IN THE MIDNIGHT.



LEFT: ROBERTO BOLFOVSKY PLAYS THE HERMOSO
SILVERADO (ROBERTO BOLFOVSKY) IN *HERMOSO*
RIGHT: ANTONIO LÓPEZ AS ANTONIO IN *EL SISTEMA*

BLOW: FEDERICO ALFONSÍ (OPERA) AND ANTONIO LÓPEZ
IN *EL SISTEMA* (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUAN GARCÍA)



screening of *Un Certain Regard*, and now of the widespread response soon spread. Excellent world sales was the result.

And, as with other Australian films, *Silently Bullying* just missed out on the Cannes d'Or for best first feature (on a 45 vote), following *Dread* in 1986 (which made the final four) and *Play* last year (the final two).¹

The success of *Silently Bullying*, plus market interest in Geoffrey Wright's *Romper Stomper*, did much to disguise the fact that 1992 was not a good year for Australian film. Next year, though, looks better. Australia should have Jane Campion's *The Piano* (Leslie in Competition), and hopefully Tracey Martin's and Laura McLean's *First Reunions* in some event. Let us hope that what looks like success in Australia's strength gets the sort of international media coverage it deserves and needs. After all, how can one expect Australia back into cinema once more if the fourth consecutive (and the world's) best producer with such disabilities?

THE COMPETITION

As usual, the prizes at Cannes created controversy, this year because they were said to favour established, academic filmmakers instead of the young and innovative. The critic, for once in accord with the prize-giving (as those in *The Player* would argue), ought to go to the best-made film, irrespective of the sort of accolades might be perceived to represent it. And the *critic* has little doubt, surely, that Bill Augerat's *The Real Americans* (Palme d'Or), Gema Arbelo's *The Stolen Children* (Grand Jury Prize) and Victor Erice's *The Queen Two-Son* (Jury Prize) were the best-made films in Competition, followed by James Ivory's *Rembrandt's Wife* (Antibes/Prix). Whether these films represent our directorate of critics or not is the point.

First, then, *The Stolen Children*, which is Gema Arbelo's fourth feature, and comes after the acclaimed *Pato Ajuste* (Open Score). Not that it had any need to do so, *The Stolen Children* confirms Arbelo's place as one of the most talented and inventive directors working today.

When she goes about a woman for prostituting her 11-year-old daughter, Rosetta (Valerie Solanas) and her younger brother, Luciano (Giuseppe Iervolino), are sent by the court to a church-run orphanage outside Rosas. But when taken care by a young

1. David Stratton is published in *The Advocate*, but he is a filmmaker who goes primarily to Cannes for *Venice* and *The Moët Show*.

2. In the international shadow, it should be noted that the head of the AFI's marketing branch is Sue Mazzoni, that writer a London-based since

3. There is little in the known stats. Up until last year, remakes were not uncommon. (The placing of *Silently Bullying* was revealed by one of the *Cannes d'Or* jury this year.) Whether other Australian films have come close is the subject of great speculation.

and rather ample-vested confusion, Antonio (Enrico Lo Verso), they are turned away because of the girl's 'past'. Antonio is also forced to take them to another state home, in Sicily. So begins the long journey south, a journey that for all Italians has enormous social and political implications.

On the way, Antonio's driven increasingly towards the children. Not only do they inspire a family protectiveness, they also liberate the child in him. Quite clearly, Antonio feels that the way society has distanced adults from children (not their own) has been disastrous for all, a fear of adolescents having put up all sorts of physical and emotional barriers.

The children are much more willing to open up emotionally, especially Rosetta, who has a very protective attitude to her brother. After having been forced to leave his mother (she while Rosetta is with a client), Luciano has no knowledge of his sister's location. She manages to keep it that way, until Luciano happens to glance at a magazine and reads for himself what has happened. The sadness of his discovery, but more important the way Rosetta is able to suppress her own hurt to help look after someone else so caretak, make for some overpowering scenes.

But, too, there are moments of light, as when Antonio, and the children take delight in a change of time-off by lolling on beaches, visiting Antonio's family (rescued in California) and walking unerringly the streets of Italy. Even an accidental meeting with a young French tourist gives one cold shiver; though, even here, the cruelty of the State manages to intrude.

The ending, which is best not revealed here, is profoundly moving. Certainly, there was no finer film at Cannes this year. In Antwerp, the critics have a new master.

As for Victor Erice, he is one of the cinema's greatest directors, but he has made only two features, *El Espíritu de la selva* (The Spirit of the Beehive, 1973) and *El Silencio* (1983). So it was an unexpected delight to find at Cannes a 100-minute documentary by him about the Spanish painter, Antonia López.

The Quiet Tree begins with López's methodical assembly of a canvas and ends with his painting, at least temporarily (for he





is a perfectionist), finished the painting and subsequent panel drawing (perhaps the real 'real' painting).

Stabbing his penis in *La Belle Nausée*, Eric's film is a precise and intense look at an artist at work. Many of the revelations are straightly exciting: the careful way Lippe positions himself so as to look at the square true while painting, marking with redwood crosses where the toes of his shoes cross and where go the white lines he paints on the floor and knows that he can check again; two planks have the two in sharing shape over the months he takes to complete the painting and sketch, the last painted lines being done in winter encroaches around him.

The film has Eric's typically measured pace, but anything quicker would break the tension between the viewer and an artist painstakingly at work. As Eric says of his experiments in recording Lippe's work:

One can observe that the artist's work appears as a kind of tissue, where feelings of absence and singularity become key elements in a representation. Surveying the results, one can see how the painter's eye and hand have managed to transmute the laws of representation, to show us finally not a direct testimony of reality but a pure revelation.

The film is packed with detail and insights into Lippe's relationship with art and life. One scene in particular, where a friend visits and a discussion on art ensues, is an humorous and revealing as anything *Cinema* could offer elsewhere. Obviously, too, a scene does not work fully or at too long, and these segments set on their own lower the visual tone (especially once József Agárdy's and Ángel Luis Fernández's bizarre colour photography is so banal).

But, why quibble when so much cinematic talent is on show? If only there could be found someone who can motivate/motivate/fund this unmaking film more often than once a decade. The present cinema scene is too three-dimensional to be able to afford his extended absences from it.

In the press giving, what actually topped both *Anselm's* and Eric's film was *Belle Auguste's* *The Best Intentions*, a superbly-crafted film that left many critics emotionally cold but had quite the reverse effect on that one.

Made concurrently with the six-hour television series that was a ratings triumph in Scandinavia, Auguste's 1988-cum-89 film is based on Ingmar Bergman's final screenplay. Developing ideas only fragmentarily dealt with in his autobiography, *Gesterna Magias et Aliqas* (London), Bergman takes an unblinking look at ten years in the life of his parents, from when they met to his birth

There is a didactic and troubled loss, not only to those the vast difference of class between the Åkerbloms and the Bergmans, but Henrik Bergman (Stenzel Pöhl) is a deeply tortured man, the ways of the flesh and weakness of spontaneous aggression, a Calvinist nature of humanist intent. In contrast, Anna Åkerblom (Veronica Östergren-Haglund) is a young woman of shyness and calm, with a delightfully 'uncharismatic' humour. As well, she has great strength and independence, and a will so determined that nothing (family, self doubt, the harshness of life as a year's work in remote areas) can stop her.

Some may find the negative aspects of character, particularly Henrik's, too powerfully drawn (especially those who prefer American love stories where everyone is perfectly nice), but there is a truth in *The Best Intentions* that is hard and clear.

The film is academic, precise, controlled and refined, but always tinged with sensitivity and feeling. Certainly it is brilliantly acted, by Patricia Daugeron-August, Stenzel Pöhl and Max von Sydow (as Anna's father) – to uniformly select a few. Ostergren-August, for one, is a revelation in the subtle way the concreteness of Anna's dutiful love for the troubled Henrik.

One should also note the brilliant photography of Birger Persson and the unrelaxed work of production designer Anna Ag. Certainly, there is no flaccid film-making of the old school, but since the newer directors could produce nothing near this standard, the Festival jury is absolutely correct in awarding it a star.

The film was compared to *The Decline of the German Cinema* by Alain Resnais, which was an early Palme d'Or favourite but had its title for the specifically named-film Academy Prize. In fact, one of the most穿刺性的 sights at Cannes was the celebratory dinner of the Jerry-Mercier group at Le Mûrier-Besson after the closing ceremony. Viewed from the adjacent table, one could see clearly the consternation at the improbable joint laurels Mercier and the dear Jerry, who would not have spoken ten words during the meal, eyes staring monotonously at his food. Maybe he was reflecting on how that elusive Palme d'Or may have slipped away from him for ever.

If that is so, it would be a pity, for Mercier and Ivory have had an extraordinary career in making a successful niche on the edges of mainstream cinema. Despite all the odds facing directors of highly personal and artistic work, especially work so as odds with the nihilistic tendencies of much cinema today, they have kept finding finance and, along the way, made some very fine films.

The plot of *Alone* need not be summarized here, for most interested readers will have already seen it by now. What should be said is that it is beautifully acted, with superb cinematography (from Tony Piatte-Robert) and precise direction. Again, Ivory-Mercier have correctly judged what modern audiences will want in a period drama.

Adapting literature a half-century or so old is a risky task, but it has now become an Ivory specialty. As usual, he comfortably brings certain modern perspectives to a novel very much of and about its time. In particular, as with the most recently set *Abs* and *Amélie*, he uses feminist issues in a way no man, however stalwart, could surely resist being seduced by. Ivory also offers a critique of the sexual stereotyping of male behaviour that is both in case of its reductive dualism, and understanding of the

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way male erosion is suppressed by it. When Mr Wilcox (Anthony Hopkins) breaks down and arises over the problem of another male, reasonably, it is both pathetic and moving.

This is a lucious film to look at, especially in the dark scenes where the new-elite stockholders in chains and densest dreams of before. The beginning, with Ruth (Vivienne Redgrave) walking through the long grass at twilight, gives a sensory pleasure not rarely experienced in the compromised images of super-spectaculars.

The precision of Ivory's direction, too, from his composing of figures in varying landscapes to the intimacy of performances from the entire cast, gives great pleasure. The easy flow in the pictorial perfection comes from the typically overly-fussy production design of Lucas Arriaga.

Not that there aren't other, more major, flaws undermining the surface perfection. The character of Helene Schlegel (Helena Bonham Carter), for example, appears equal screen time early on, but is allowed neither to magnify nor to very pitifully become more convincing (and embarrassing). There is also the too little analysis (in a 142 minute film) of how and why she and her sister, Margaret (Ruth Thompson), take divergent paths.

Particularly puzzling is why Margaret chooses to marry Mr Wilcox, a most uninteresting and conservative man, especially when she is established as so lively and intelligent a woman. This being an Ivory film, sex (fatalistic loss) is not raised as a possible cause for inactivity. Rather, Ivory seems to conceive of male-female relationships as pliant free-drifts (or necessary social contracts). When in this film he casts眼睛 with his co-writer into the bonding between Leonard and Basie (Sam Rock) and himself (Wycle夫 Duffell)—Ivory makes a woman's healthy sexuality look shrill. Like too many an Ivory male, Leonard heads towards sex with a woman, rash or reluctantly, if not apathetically. Ivory really ought to try to be a little more objective.

An even more major criticism is that the film's resolution goes unquestioned of what seems to everyone in dispute. For all the film's attempts at social criticism, it ultimately reinforces the English notion that classes should not mix, in the results that can be disastrous (especially for the poor). Leonard's sensitivity and

striving for aesthetic experience outside that of his working-class origins leads first to poverty and then to death, killed by the sort of boozes that inspired him in the first place to hope for better things. Surely Ivory can't be serious.

Equally, the film comes too much for the prettiness of the period and too little for the lives of its down-trodders. Sure one is happy Margaret, Helene and the baby have the green-beamed Howard. End of film's close, but why is Leonard's widow so conspicuously ignored? Her dramatic purpose served, she is callously passed aside.

Also from England—and this time with a British director—comes Terence Davies' *The Long Day Closes*. For those not won over by his compilation feature of *Distant Voices* and *Still Lives*, his new work may prove a major surprise. The cold tone and heterodoxies of the previous work is gone (no more drunken men and sexual violence), and replaced by warmth toward people they emerge on the sentimental. Certainly the boy's love for his mother can both move, but without a shivered father, and the anger directed at him, love for mother dominates.

This change of tone was greatly welcomed at Cannes, especially by several of the director's friends who have long been advocating Davies put more of his raw good humor into his work. Certainly such agrees confluence, Davies looked and sounded a man finally at ease with his new film and his life.

In *The Long Day Closes*, Davies continues the storylines of *Still Lives*, again 'investigating' an arc through which life, as a boy, passed with stylized images and period songs (incredibly fewer this time).

Some critics were disappointed that Davies has jettisoned his homosexuality (all boys avoided except for a loving shot of a half-naked labourer and a painting scene where the boy watches his brother's sleep). When questioned about this, Davies argued that he had had no sexual feelings by the age of eleven (the boy's age).

Technically, the film is a dazzling visual triumph of technique and (again) of the new European cinematic stocks. The compositions are precise, the choreography consistently refined (unlike in *Distant Voices*) and the performances perfect.

What undermines partially these striking achievements, however, is Davies' preoccupation with audaciousness that it doesn't really add up to all that much beyond picture-perfect nostalgia. Davies is exceptionally courageous in his narrative patterning, but is forced as they tend to feel the last and much still. It comes as little surprise to hear from Davies that his autobiographical concern journey in at an end.

Still, the film shows a care and love that makes one want to ignore it.

Another major contribution of films at Cannes this year was Russia. Both Pavel Lunguine and Vitali Kozlovsky, who had stunned Cannes 1990 with *Tax Blue* (Their Director) and *Step, Do, Be, Agree* (Kino-Optik), were back with new work.

Kozlovsky's *Semanañashenshia film* (An Indomitable Light) continues the largely auto-biographical story of Valerik (Pavel Lunguine). There is not a story as such, rather a largely unconnected series of self-contained scenes, mostly concerned with Valerik's coming to terms with his own sexuality and how sex is



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treated in society. Everything is fearfully directed and strikingly composed, but the effect is strangely unconvincing; nowhere does Krasovskii generate the power of the first film.

Krasovskii also succeeds believably by bringing back the actress who played Galia, the girl killed at the end of the first film, as Galia's previously unheard-of sister, Valeria. Quite clearly, actress Dunira Drouotouva is playing the same character and Krasovskii is unable to pretend otherwise. In this most post-modern of works, why did he not just re-introduce her? Why should a screen death mean a character can't live on?

Vincent, the film is often startling, but too often Krasovskii is obsessed with a striking technique when nothing is happening dramatically. It is overkill and munda the viewer. How many clothing removals of people doing and saying nothing does he really need? There are brief moments of tenderness, such as the separation of Valeria and Valera at the end, but, yet again, Krasovskii has a girl die in part for the male to find herself.

As well, Krasovskii's concentration on horrific images unconvincing apart from merely reinforcing the audience's sense of how bad life could be in Russia (and this hardly saves), when the point of his disease-energy evokes out of it. Almost acknowledging that, Krasovskii tries to be even more horrific than before with a particularly bloody abortion, endless scenes of violence and a sequence where Valeria dances with flesher men than slugs. The stage of burning rats accompanying in terror and agony this

the night is unforgettable, but Krasovskii evokes nothing more meaningful than midriff horrors at his staging such a scene.

In *Luna Park*, Fred Loquai deals with a modern problem how neo-fascist gangs in cities like Moscow are trying to rid society of "undesirables" (homosexuals, gays, Jews). It is a perverted new form of the "cleaning" done in more Stalinist times, and the repercussions are frightening. In Russia, for example, the gangs usually run the city that is closed off from the rest of Russia and the world.

Loquai opens boldly with a bloody fight on a road close to front of the Moscow parliament instead of Yelton bravely making a career out of chaos, here stage is unleashed in an orgy of physicality. Vehicles inspired by Mad Maxxed with motor-bikes, spiked tyres and leaves ripping into flesh, and blood splattering on the muddy ground.

As in *Taxi Blue*, where Loquai takes a very Dostoevskian view of a shifting "master and servant" relationship between a taxi driver and his passenger, here he focuses in similar manner (though less precisely) on the relationship between a gang leader and his long-lost father.

Andrei (Andréi Gorzis) and Alena (Natalia Leparskaya) run a Moscovian gang, running putas/locally-mummified parkish money roller-coaster (a symbol in many ways for Loquai's of the path of modern Soviet history). One day, Alena demands Andrei by telling him he has a Jewish father. This means immediate expulsion from the group, and a troubled journey for Andrei leaving his father and reconciling his anti-Semitic hatred with his own culture.

Andreï's father is Natan Blatstein (Oleg Borodov), whom Andrei first thinks of killing, but slowly comes to relate to. And out of this confusing, troubled relationship, Andrei emerges with a new sense of identity, even given the "surprise" events at the end. Just as Taxi Blue ends dramatically, the "master" stuck in his inability to change and the "servant" now the more powerful, here Andrei learns that the decisions taken in life may be mistaken ones, but it is only through individual action does change come – within oneself and in society at large.

Of course, it is impossible not to read this as a political allegory, but what matters most to Loquai is the personal journey forward. Clearly he sees changing Russia coming from an amateur ideology, a mix from one of the left or right. In that sense, despite the bleak violence of much of his images, the film is a deeply optimistic one. That was missed by the many who were turned off by the film's starkness. Yet here is a film in which the director seriously poses a solution, instead of resorting to the ultimate cop-out: "It is not for me to suggest solutions, but to pose questions."

What weaves *Luna Park* as a film, and makes it a somewhat disappointing follow-up to *Taxi Blue*, is the skimpiness of many conventional/fabulous progressive structures (the director has admitted the script was rushed). As well, Loquai's obsession with depicting violence (like Australian Geoffrey Wright's in the non-dramatic, but much more regressive, *Reaper Stopped*) is off-putting. Like Krasovskii, one suspects he enjoys the staging of a bad too much.

From France came three films to the Competition. The first, though less liked, was Michel Clavel's *Ange-Papa déjâ-jeter*. It is the story of three women prison inmates sharing, by accident, a 24-hour pass of leave. Brilliantly choreographed, shot and edited with wild proliferation from Maren Ade's style, *Laurie* (Dorothée and Claire Denisov), the film is infused with sexual sweet-and-sour tinge.





The film conveys most powerfully the sense of how one misjudgment can mean much of a person's life is effectively over. No paraphrase = loss of dialogue! We are all capable of such mistakes and it is hard to think of any other film, not even George Stevens' *A Place in the Sun* (1951), which so flagrantly conveys that.

Equally affecting is the gradual development of friendship between these young women. Though their adventures together are necessarily center-effect (going for a train, drinking coffee, staking a nightshift, walking the streets), there evolves a delicate and pernicious bond that, without a hint of tumultuousity, is quietly moving.

Where Chantal does makes a misjudgement is in having each character go into conformist mode in the style of 1950s American films ("Suddenly, last summer. . ."). The stories they relate, caught into the lens, are not always riveting (and tended to be lampooned all over France by critics). Neither are these stories necessary, because we know instantly these women are unfortunate victims, typical of anyone who has made a mistake through loss of judgement, rather than managing to mess up. Specific explanations are not needed.

That aside, *An Payne* is definitely a small gem. It is hard to explain adequately the psychological film about women, especially after all these *Hiroshima*, *Nirvana* about men finding themselves, where women are at best peripheral catalysts.

One such film is *Banned/Nicaragua*: *La Haine à Casanova*, the story of the aging Casanova (Alain Delon). Barred from returning to his beloved Venice, Casanova has set out in France with his faithful, and sometimes annoying, manservant, Gérard (Christophe Lachaud). But even in the provinces of the south, Casanova finds it hard to get away from his "legendary" sexual status, especially when he has no money and satisfying a female body is often the only way to satisfy an outstanding hotel bill.

The inevitable irony is that Casanova should finally fall in love – and with someone disinterested in him. Marcolini (Elba) is a modernized and spunked girl with an aversion to anology. She

EATING TALES: ANNE DUVWXYZ AND HE MÉDIOU
STÉPHANE, JEAN DUVWXYZ, JEAN PERRIN,
LILI THIERRY, HÉLÈNE BONNETTE, AND ALICE GUÉRIN
PHOTO: JEAN-PIERRE ALLEGRA/LE PLATEAU

lives at her uncle's chateau, where Casanova goes as a privileged guest, having been in a way responsible for the casting nephew of Oliva (Gilles Arbona) and his wife, Andie (Delphine Boëlle). What Oliva, of course, does not realize is that of that Andie ever dreams of a once again sleeping with Casanova. But for Casanova the first conquest is all, and returning to the site of previous conquest has no interest for him.

So the scheming begins, Andie to bed Casanova, and Casanova to bed Marcolini. In the process, Nicaragua takes us through a society ruled by class and notions of approved behaviour. That is to say, for example, a middle-aged widow who is an elderly Marquise (Alain Corneau) takes on and destroys at cards Marcolini's partner in love, Lorenzo (Wadeck Savoia).

While the first half of the film resembles a wistful series of *Romans* (Michel Deville, 1968), the second humanizes distant toward darkness as Casanova is allowed to return to Venice on the condition he spy for the State. The city is a pass along the old buildings of the Grand Canal, and the dramatic positioning of Casanova and his confidantes on the positive, suggest Casanova is leading toward death. In a sense, it is an inevitable fate for one who had to rely on trickery to get his sexual way (he entered Marcolini's dark bedroom disguised as Lorenzo, where he was just killed, d'uh, in a duff).

The film was described by Nick Rockwell in *Moving Picture International*, the daily bible at Casanovas, as a good example of an old-fashioned French film made for a European audience. That is competent, endearing, and lifted by the presence of a star (Delon) and by excellent period recreation. Ultimately, though, it is a less-than-truly film and somewhat propagandistic.

What undermines one's response to the otherwise powerful and nicely crafted film is the decision to show no interview in the life of Marcolini. Her confusion and uncertainty that she has been tricked by Casanova's disguise (and why did not Casanova's inevitably different social techniques give him away?) is allowed only a brief close-up and a gap. The result is more mystery. Despite having been set up as an admirably modern and independent woman, Nicaragua comes Marcolini's end, just as Casanova has done with his innumerable other conquests.

The third French film in *Casanoviana* was *L'Amoureuse*, a belated feature from Arnold Drapérech, who graduated from IDE (In the same class as Eric Rohmer, who has already made two important features, *Une Vie de Poissons* and *Les Fourgs du Moulin*) and Christine Vassiot (who directed the acclaimed *Le Désert*, which you may be seen in Australia).

Drapérech has all the markings of a neoréaliste (*à la Louis Garrel*), even if his film is only mildly successful. At its best, his direction is crisp and poised, though some scenes are rather perfunctorily directed (pass back and forth between necessarily compromised love-ups). He shows evidence of a director who will fashion a strong personal style, and he gets good performances from his largely young cast.

The story is a political tale of the lessons that refuse to be learned (in this case an unannounced land). Mathias Baudé (Benoit Magloire), the son of a diplomat and brought up in Germany, is forced on his trip journey back to France by a shadowy figure of the political underground (who places the head in Mathias' suitcase). A medical student, Mathias spends the rest of the film trying to discover where head it was and, in the process, the energies behind today's post-war politics. The lesson is that cold war game-playing then hard.

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FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT AND SALLY
STRICKER (TOP); ROBERT DE NIRO AND RAYMOND DE
BUSSAC (MIDDLE); ANNEE D'ALBÉAUM, BRUNO GODEFROY
AND PATRICK PRESTON (BOTTOM) COURTESY OF
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL AND THE CINÉMA FRANÇAIS

The film is far too long (145 min) for its starkly developed narrative line and, while many scenes are sharply drawn, their relevance is only marginal. One might be tempted to say the film is mendacious, but that would be unfair. This is the work of a talented director finding his feet. His next film should reveal much.

After much brouhaha in the U.S., Robert Altman's *The Player* descended at Cannes. It is not the pretentious hard-hitting black satire on Hollywood but rather a sharp sketch of a film which, in its true heart, is more than half in love with what it pretends to criticize.

The Player is a film with very little wit and almost no humor. It is decently directed, the acting unconvincing (apart from the ever reliable Peter Gallagher) and the writing weaker than usual for Altman (the scene where poor Sam Reynolds tries to sustain a conversation over breakfast is a non-starter, Reynolds should not be taken seriously).

Tim Robbins, winner of Best Actor, is particularly unconvincing as the callous studio executive, Griffin Mill, who fails to divulge his mother's affair of a cocaine-sniffing writer. (Hasn't Altman always excused his mother's affair and not his son's?) And for the last part our actors, with one or two exceptions near the end, the whole idea is drabbing. How can one fully enjoy a film when audiences sit there groggy. "Is that Jerry Lewis? ... No, it's Jeff Goldblum?"

Altman's film takes an unpleasantly superior position to mainstream American cinema. What he fails to realize is that his film is rather inferior to much of the world's more interesting cinema (it certainly failed to find a warm reception at Cannes). No, Altman is as lost with the bulletins of Hollywood, with the deal and the back-room games (one only had to see him "work" *Capacity*), and for him to pretend otherwise is dangerous.

Sidney Lumet's *A Stranger Among Us* ("Close to Eden" was the preferred title) is, like Peter Weir's *Witness*, in which seemingly every critic complained it undeniably the story of a cop who goes and lives among a sheltered religious community. Here, Emily Edens (Melissa Gilbert) has to solve a "Wilestreet disappearance," which soon becomes a murder investigation. Suspecting no malice among the Jewish diamond trade, she gets into the Hassidic community (which many critics, mostly Jewish, found unbearable and led to heated exchanges at the press conference, which the writer, the son of a Rabbi, says on record).

In the Hassidic community, Edens meets and falls in love with Ariel (Ray Liotta), the son of the Rebbe (the innumerable cults quote often to her and about which she is at first dismissive; he is guided by an experience that gives him religious audacity and role in the community a new and richer perspective). Almost, as an epiphany, Edens solves the crime (with the aid of a sexist cop who, as it turns out, is a good one).

Mostly, *A Stranger Among Us* is an ethnographic study of the Hassidic, with warmth and a total lack of critical judgement — something rather typical in Lumet's work. The lack of perspective makes the film look unconvincing (as critics Lumet conspicuously avoided at his press conference).

Still, there is much that is new and interesting to see. Hasidic people still, given no documentary is likely to be made inside the community (they refuse to have anything to do with the cinema, including watching it), one is grateful for the insights given here.

Coupled with the points of the Hasidim are two other narrative strands: the police mystery and the love story. The former is perfunctory at best and clearly of only minimal interest to the scriptwriter and director, as can be seen in the amazingly bathetic scene where Edens cracks the plot (thus ending the movie not by a good 90 mins).

Where *A Stranger Among Us* does work, and work beautifully, is with the love story, the core of the film in years. Its sensitively acted and very moving. Both Griffith and Thal are revolutions in these scenes and Lumet proves, yet again, what a superb director he is of actors.

If the critics didn't like the Lumet, mainly they hated the David Lynch. His *Twin Peaks* (TV) Walk 1988. Now, finally the monovocal disappeared off the screen. Congratulation, the press boozing at the end and also hating Lynch as he entered the press conference. Two years ago they were cheering him for a film (*Mild at Best*) that is no better.

Twin Peaks (TV) Walk 1989 is a sequel to the television series and covers the last seven days of Laura Palmer. Some of the same characters appear, mostly for a bit or two, others (like Audrey) are missing, and there are some new ones, such as the FBI agent played by Kyle MacLachlan and Chris Isaak. David Bowie, despite prominent talking, will become a character and says over ten lines hardly memorable.

Given that most of the audience already knows the ending (that Laura gets murdered, by whom and why), one may have thought Lynch might try to underline that expectation with new postmodern games. But no, the film solemnly leads to its preordained conclusion without a flicker of invention or interest.

Many critics questioned why Lynch should want to return to what is already safe territory, since it is clear that the television audience is bored with the story. Equally surprising is that Lynch uses the same cheap set and locations, and even a small aspect ratio, thus making the whole thing look as if it could have been





that can be learned while the film was in production. There is nothing, except for this film, that one can't get from the series movies.

The story as such is very dull, the casting clichéd. Sherry Lee, of course, has now gone from being cast as corpse to playing the lead role in a feature, so her less than inspiring performance is arguably northerndark. What is surprising is that Lynch referred to her in his press conference as a great actress, a great find.

Most critics, in a state of shock at why this had failed so far, concentrated on the violence. Yet, the film is deeply offbeat in its laudable portrayal of violence (thereby matching its subject to sex and language). But Lynch made no convincing attempt to justify his pornography of violence, arguing instead that it is a director he is interested in everything. But his own film contradicts him: the sex and violence sequences are directed with far more attention to detail, number of camera positions and intensity of movement than anything else. Scenes of a car travelling from X to Y, or one character explaining a plot point to another, are perfectly shot, often in a bladed single shot.

Take too the sound. When a bullet enters a brain, the sound is a marvel of post-production, and synchronization. Lynch makes dead sound delicious. No such care or enthusiasm is accorded footage on a grave, et al.

Also in Competition was Hal Hartley's third film, *Sophie's Choice*. It is a very slowly told tale of two brothers searching for their radical, on-the-run father. Like the work of Jim Jarmusch and Bernardo Bertolucci, the film has off-beat, fringe-of-society characters, dialogue based on deconstruction of language and with a nihilistic edge, as if western civilization (and cinema) has exhausted itself. All scenes have been told, all emotions played out, all moral goodness evoked. Only the ending contradicts this, which was convincingly purified from Robert Bresson's *Psiyote*.

The acting is minimalist, the framing precious and the whole tone tinged about its own cleverness. This is exactly the Hartley formula.

Then again, just as an early era (links intriguing, one guesses here) of a technically-maturing style being developed. And behind the veneer there is a tension between the relatives and a sweeteness which suggests a much more interesting character at work. One will have to wait and see.

Also disappointing was *Oscar*, the first feature of New Zealand director Alain Berliner, who made the heralded short film *Atmosphère*. *Oscar* is an unevenly flawed work typifying many of the misjudgments of last year's festival.

The story concerns two women, Lane (Marcia Gay Harden) and Christina (Dough Rees), whose friendship turns to revengeful game playing after a routine car accident when Lane is at the wheel. Into their small world enter an androgynous adolescent girl, Angels (Colleen Booty), and her wayward father, Colin (William Zappa). As loyalties and sexual desire change, so inevitably does

the thin fabric that holds aberrant behaviour in check.

The blank film, made with an eye to rendering every location and person as ugly as possible (to sometimes rather succeed effect), stretches its premise to breaking point. The two aspects are not necessarily handled (just all too monotonous and obvious), and the drama is denied of levity. Medicinalism does not help here with dull performances all round (just the enigmatic Bonny), very poor post-dubbing and sound mixing, and less-than-commanding photography.

No film in Competition seems poorly received in print and its inclusion was widely seen as testimony to the dire shortage of interesting work by women directors. Still, at least New Zealand got a film in Competition, which is more than Australia could manage.

From Senegal came Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Hyena*, a scathing of French Detachment: a play *On Search for the Dead* (*The Fox*).

Languishing Kamouna (Aminata Sow) is an old woman and now unreasonably wealthy, returned after twenty years after her native coastal village of Colobane. Seeing the dire poverty all around her, she promises to help, but only if her one-time lover, and the village shapeshifter, Drameau Drameu (Mamour Diakhaté), is exonerated for having claimed paternity of her child. The villagers indignantly refuse, but the promise soon builds.

The film is always allegorical and clearly so at the end where Drameau's fate is visually linked with that of a modernised Senegal. Well shot and with a particularly likable cast of characters (see the singer Sarracou), *Hyena* is an enjoyable film. From a cinema-poor country, it is also quite remarkable.

By world standards, however, the film lacks a strong narrative drive and the complexity of Diop Mambéty's play is lost but not quite to non-native taste. Still, elegorical as it needs to be simple and the film's social value in Senegal is impossible to judge from here.

Raid Raï's Spanish-French *La Cigala Muerte* (*Dark at Noon*) is a long-anticipated surrealism distinguished few from (one being Daniel Santoni). An endlessly biological coproduction, it makes one only too aware the disparity between master (Juan Benet) and would-be pupil. Little will be said for or against Adrien Marais (taken up in case).

Also shown in Competition, but unimpressed by the critic, were Gary Sinise's *Of Mice and Men*, which was warmly received but was also accused of being old-fashioned, the acclaimed *Leslie* by Canadian Jean-Claude Lamarche, and Fernando Solanas' *El Vago* (*The Journey*). Special Screenings included Alan Howard's *Blame for and After*, the recordable *Dolce* of Debra Winger, Queenie Tanakawa's *Reservoir Dogs* and Vicent Ward's *Madame Huemus Heart*.

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Gianni Amelio's The Stolen Child

This year at Cannes, Gianni Amelio won the Jury Prize for *Il Ladro di Bambini* (*The Stolen Children*), the story of an 11-year-old girl who has been forced into prostitution, and the young policeman who escorts her and her brother to a children's home in Sicily. It is a moving plea for a society in which children and adults can once again freely interact.

Gianni Amelio is an unnamed Australian film director with an increasingly spare and powerful style of cinema (*Snowy River*), which was shown at the festival and on PBS. It is an unassuming analysis of terrorism told through the story of a father (Jean-Louis Trintignant) and his teenage son (Francesco Russo).

The same Amelio is seen in Australia's *Possessor* (Open/End), which many critics rightly praised as the best adaptation of a LeCarre-Schindler novel since François Truffaut's *Contempt* (*Mauves Coquilles* / *The Contempt*). Coming from a culture where Schindler dominated the literary scene in a way no one had since Langdon, that was no insignificant achievement.

The year's Cannes Grand Jury screening of his latest venture, *The Stolen Children*.

What gave you the idea for *The Stolen Children*?

It came to me three years ago, after seeing a photograph in a newspaper in a horrifying article about a woman who had turned her eight-year-old daughter into a prostitute. And the photo showed the little girl from behind as she walked down the street holding a grown man's hand.

The photo was highly analogous, nothing occurred with images, neither photographs or television pictures, without words or captions to explain them. So the caption here was: "The girl being taken to a children's home by a policeman."

That was how the film came about, and also because I wanted to tell a story about the things that are happening all round us: a film that shares the discomfort that we are all more of.

What relationship is there between *The Stolen Children* and your previous films?

Café al Clave, *I Rigore di Via Persicope* and *Possessor* are strictly "high profile" films, in terms of their contents and the massive critical (journalism, media coverage, theatrical prints). But in *The Stolen Children*, the problem was to find a sort of new purity of language while, at the same time, trying not to make it an issue, with a capital "I". Even the chosen of the hero—a professional policeman—is set for the filthiness, and to wipe out any trace of meditation. I used to auxiliary intention to history from the author's point of view, and to connect events directly without trying to disseminate anything or be metaphorical.



You have stressed the idea of the simplicity of the film but you have also reported the intention of "authorship". Can you explain exactly what you mean by that?

"Reggio" has ended up by being establishment in many instances. I feel uncomfortable today about what I would call the author's arrogance. I see it in a different kind of mystification. Rossellini used to say, "I don't calculate anything, I know what to say, and I find the most direct way of saying it. That's all. I don't go to enormous lengths. If I say what I want to, it's not important how it is said."

What do you change when you are on the set? For example, how was the shooting of *The Stolen Children*?

Since this was a fairly low-budget film, without using established actors, I was able to treat the screenplay fairly freely, leaving considerable room to improvisation. That is something I always consider to be indispensable. I'm afraid of seeing the script on the screen all over again, even though I know it forever.

On the set of *The Stolen Children*, I wrote the dialogue as we went along, changing the message as we filmed, bringing in new characters and cutting out others from the script. It's a risky way of working, and demands tremendous freedom of action.

From the point of view of the language, what has changed in your way of making films?



dren

Today we are being bombarded with far more images than we ever were ten or twenty years ago; you had to go out and look for images in those days, building them up. Today you have to snap them, keep them at arm's length. The man took now is no longer a fragment of an image, and then makes a difference, detached in one way or another from everything that the people see before their eyes (everyday hours a day on the television screen). And then you offer them a kind of value-added, a different coefficient. I think that the "value" consisting has to be suggested through things, detached from any preconceived idea or formal construction.

Does this mean emphasizing the documentary aspect of the drama?

Some once said something quite extraordinary. The reality that we show today with the camera must be protected as far as possible by closing the doors on true reality, but, when it comes to showing, this has to be done by leaving a window open by accident, as it were, so that something can come in that will be able to overturn all your plans. The real language of the camera comes about moment by moment, and it is often things that suggest it to you. That does not change the fact that the main job has to be done in the planning phase, characterizing alternatives rather than scrupulously defining, sticking to a feeling, an idea, that subsequent contaminations can perhaps touch, but not wipe out. Directing is like an iceberg: the set, shooting, are only the visible part above the surface.

Your film shows a seriously failing Italy: a ruined environment, degraded human relations.

It shows a country which no longer knows what is wrong with it. The atmosphere of *The Stolen Children* is quite different from that of the newest film it has sometimes been compared with. People in those films were the post-war Italians, who suffered the disaster that had befallen them, and were determined to put it behind them. Today, they belong to an apathetic and blinded Italy, which has given up any desire to live in a civil society, a country where such values as solidarity and dignity survive in the outsiders, the marginalized.

Children and teenagers play an important part in your films.

But the real protagonist is always the adult. The child is often the mask worn by the adult who has grown up, and remains harder and more courageous than the adult, less willing to compromise. Children and teenagers are more like a mirror that gives a distorted reflection of the adult before them — a dream in his consciousness.

How did you work with the two leading child actors and with a young theatre actor like Emanuele Lo Venco?

It is important to choose the right actor for whatever role. Then you have to work on the actor and not on the character. In other words, always start with the actor and the way he is used to doing things, and make his character fit him rather than the other way round.

I am accustomed unhappy about too much emphasis being on composition, and so I always try to find something that breaks things down, surprises and brings something unexpected on to the screen. With children this is easy. They have a devilish innocence. Emanuele Lo Venco was able to become an innocent. ■

[Reprinted from the Cinema press book on *The Stolen Children*.]



Vitali Kanievski's *An Independent Life*

Vitali Kanievski made his first feature at the age of 54. Though having entered the Moscow film school in 1960, his studies were interrupted by eight years of gaoi. He finally received his diploma in 1977, but after two shorts was effectively blacklisted as a director in the Soviet Union.

Kanievski did not give up and in 1989 made *Don't Kill Me, Die and Be Angry*, which won the Camera d'Or at Cannes the following year. In 1992 he was back with *Emancipation*, the *An Independent Life*, a continuation of the first film's largely autobiographical story.

Eighteen months ago you were asked to make a film about Soviet prisons. Why did you prefer to make *An Independent Life*, the sequel to *Don't Kill Me, Die and Be Angry*?

Right after Cannes (1989), I found it very difficult to get back to work. Emotions had been running so high for so long. During the shooting of *Don't Kill Me, Die and Be Angry*, I was afraid that I'd never be able to make another movie. I had the impression that I was dying, falling apart. Then the film's reception by the public in the West had a very similar effect on me.

The second film I was planning, which was intended to be about prison, needed too much preparation, and the topic was too far removed from what I was experiencing, so that I decided to shoot the following to *Don't Kill Me, Die and Be Angry*. I didn't expect it to be so difficult, in the heart of a country in the middle of massive changes. If a average that film ever see the light of day—especially when one has to shoot in 60 different locations, in seven different towns, when money in the key to all relationships, when there is a strange sort of friction in the air—that doesn't make things any easier.

Why did you choose to film *An Independent Life* in colour?

I don't consider the film to be in colour. The work done on the film itself is very particular. When Stalin died, there was a sort of pink rose in the sky, alabaster smoke, the film inspired by this basic idea. It is not a technical procedure, it simply means removing all the editorial elements from the scenario and costumes. Take the opening scene, for instance, of the horse in the snow looking at it, one doesn't know whether the film is going to be black and white or in colour.

On the other hand, from time to time I use very strong colours, but then it is in there something animal—one of the characters' wishes or dreams, such the folk dances on the occasions or the blind man crossing the bridge. This play on colours follows the complex narrative pattern of the film.

I think there are a few breaks in the structure that will surprise a little. I have followed the rhythm of my main character who in a period of his life where he is capable of abrupt and sudden changes of personality. I also echoed visual and sound



elements, so that the spectator will bounce back and come to a scene. The film is a lot less naive than *Don't Kill Me, Die and Be Angry*.

An Independent Life opens with a voice singing off screen, and a horse moving along in the snow. Then suddenly the voice says, "That's not it..." The film slows down and then starts again. Is this you giving advance warning that the film is shot in the first person singular, that the story will be told from a subjective point of view?

There is indeed all of that. But, throughout the whole film, there is never a unique interpretation of a given scenario; there are many meanings.

The opening scene, for me, is about loss. It says that if you dream about a horse, sing it twice you. I say that it is better to go backwards a hole than forwards one arrow, and that whatever you start, especially life itself, you are bound to cross across betrayal of some sort. But you can always get through these lies and betrayals.

Like your previous film, *An Independent Life* is openly autobiographical. The young Golia, who dies at the end of *Don't Kill Me*, a sister called Valika, who is played by the same young actress (Dianara Dzakarova). Did this person really exist?

To be honest, she was a cousin, and she didn't look like her that much. But I was so pleased with my little star that I wanted to use her again.

Also, in the beginning of the film, even though Valerka has grown up, he still needs a guardian angel, represented alternately by Golia and Volka. You know, *Don't Kill Me, Die and Be Angry* was originally to be called "The Guardian Angel".

t Life

That Valerka has grown up, and the story of his "independence" parallels the story of his sexual initiation. The bare discussions in all its forms the soft embrace of love, the loose of rape, the horror of a back-street abortion. The film possesses a crudeness which moviegoers are no longer used to.

All this drawn from my own life, and I always try to film it in the most delicate way possible. Try to deal with it artistically. Valerka doesn't know how to go about it, he is completely disarmed. Take for example the scene when his neighbour, Sofia Arbatova, throws herself at him. If I hadn't cut the dialogue, the scene would have been crude, maybe even vulgar. But in order to keep the feeling of tenderness that I remember of this scene, the sequence had to be short.

What makes Valerka so seductive?

The fact that he's independent, that he can look after himself. He is capable of being lonely. The difference between his appearance and his attitude is what makes him seductive. He also has a certain innocence about him, a pure sort of innocence that makes him want to seduce girls who are "too good for him", like a little puppy that throws itself at an enormous dog. Sometimes it works.

Throughout the film Valerka is exposed to very extreme violence, yet it doesn't seem to affect him.

He is growing up and, back home, violence is not considered cruel. His beat everyone husbands beat their wives, wives beat their husbands. Do you know the one about the two Soviet wives? The first one says: "My husband doesn't know me these days." "What makes you think that?", asks the second one. "He doesn't beat me anymore!"

And Valerka is also at an age where he thinks freely before he acts. You can make a child cry and he'll come back laughing a few seconds later. He goes so emotional over the death of his pig as over Goya's death. This is why there are fairly brutal changes of mood throughout the film.

But does this unawareness mean Valerka is innocent, especially concerning Valerka's death?

Are we really sure she is dead? Is it really her that fell into the water? Either way, Valerka is already dead in Valerka's mind. Is he guilty of

having betrayed her? It's human nature: "Out of sight, out of mind".

My own life is filled with mistakes, betrayals, shaped errors I have made. Maybe others live differently. We can always try to forgive everything, but nothing ever turns over the way we would have wanted it to.

What kind of relationship did you have with your two principal actors, Pavel Naumov and Dinares Dzakirova, the same two who starred in your first film, *Don't Blow, Be and Be Again*? I think that they enjoy working with me. I know that we now have a very strong bond. Our relationship is based on love, and I sincerely believe that it cannot really go wrong.

In general, how do you direct your actors?

I tell them exactly what they are supposed to do. That is to say instructions for them first. In a movie like a children's film, on the sheet it makes everyone laugh more than anything else but I carry on anyway. And I do the same for every character in the sequence, even for an extra in the background. Everyone has a precise job to do: a calculated move to make which I block. Normally I only shoot two takes.

Using non-professional actors is very complicated, because one pays them some money, they tend to expect a lot, thinking that they have to earn their money. That's the worst part, once they have delivered their lines they turn straight round to me, as if to ask: "How was it?" One has to be extremely rigid with details like that.



APPEL NAKED BABY: ROMAN, THE APPRENTICE, AND
CHARACTERS FROM YOUR EYES ARE GREEN. © 1991 INDEPENDENT FILM & FESTIVAL PRODUCTIONS
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Vitali Kanievski

The end of the film is openly metaphorical. First there is the setting free of the floating rats, then the strange movement, in which Valerka seems to recover his memory, and finally the couple running naked. It seems as if there is no difference between man and beast. Is that what you were looking for?

Absolutely. It is the triumph of savagery over reason.

The running couple could seem like human beings. But you know, when a child birth himself in a pack of wolves, he starts to run like a wolf.

This is followed by the final monologue which Valerka speaks facing the camera and in which he explains the meaning of the title *in a box*. We get the impression that he addresses not only the spectators but that he speaks directly to you, that he is about to step out into liberty. The chapter of memory is concluded, he begins:

I couldn't find another way to end the film. Valerka is also speaking to himself. The two examples he has taken up in these represent a woman and a man, and even as he is explaining this, Valerka discovers the simplicity of things: the fact that the masculine and feminine principles are inseparable... yet never become one. He begins to grow up.

One supposes then that there will not be a third film as openly auto-biographical.

If you say so! It is true that things are getting more and more difficult. I still have this project.

Isn't it a very strange and unique film project to want to tell one's life story in such detail?

That my life resembles millions of Somov lives. Practically everyone has lived in this kind of atmosphere. And in the four corners of the ex-USSR, even in its most remote provinces. Life was the same: the same buildings, the same names, the same machinery.

All the same, there are moments of happiness – or episodes that are more beautiful as memory than they were in reality.

Yes, I prefer remembering the jolly moments. Take the drunkard for example: so his own way he is happy, in his puddle in Balaklava. You know, even Raskolnikov has spent at least a couple of hours of his life in a muddy puddle of water, just like him.

Do you feel you have a calling to write as witness, as a sort of spokesman?

No. I don't have anything in particular to say. It is simply that I've worked in all sorts of jobs in my life, but never had I felt so much pleasure, such intensity, as in making films... Well, except maybe when I was a thief.

[Reprinted from the *Convergent book*.]



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Australian Films

*Australian films received a mixed reception at Cannes this year. On the one hand, Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom* won the kind of acclaim that most first-time directors dream about. Not so the other Australian films that went to Cannes like so many little piggies to market, and came home again, unsold and (one assumes) critically unloved.*

At the midnight screening which introduced *Strictly Ballroom* to Cannes, the audience really did dance in the aisle in response to the film's optimistic and infectious dance rhythms. And who counts, precisely, the number of戛纳电影节 that constitute a prolonged razzia? Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes on our feet clapping? It seemed a very long time.

If *Strictly Ballroom* failed to garner the critical reception accorded *Prague* four years ago, it was nonetheless adored and enjoyed by critics and the general public alike for its energy and originality. Like *Prague*, it successfully entered winning the *Cannes d'Or* for best first film by a director, by three votes to four (the award that year being won by John Turturro's *Mad*), and, before Cannes was over, the announcement that *Strictly Ballroom* had been sold worldwide. By any criteria, *Strictly Ballroom* was a success.

But this review of Australian films at Cannes is concerned less with the success or not of Australian films in the marketplace than with probing the further development of an idiosyncratic, nonmainstream Australian cinema—a cinema which appears especially determined, vis-à-vis the larger backdrop of world cinema at Cannes. While it would be foolish to deny that in some aspects some of these films are crossing the mark, it must be recognized that because they are not endorsed without reservation by the world market (which, in many instances, it punctuates: the U.S., France and Italy, for example), we tend to talk these films down, exhibiting in our enthusiasm at perceived failure yet another variation of the great Australian critique.

Strictly Ballroom was a crowd pleaser at Cannes for several reasons. It is a flamboyant and exuberant film, with an upbeat ending that makes people feel good. It also has a ingenue, research expert about it which is an engaging and attractive new young star, Paul Mercurio.

Merrano plays Scott Hastings, a ballroom champion who flouts convention and brings the wrath of the all-powerful President of the Federation of Ballroom Dancing (Bill Hunter) down on his head when he dares to dance his own steps.

In the 1970s, John Boorman captured all the male beauty and mischievousness of ballroom dancing in a series of surreal paintings which summed the dancers' grim determination. Director Baz Luhrmann captures this in his film, but carries it a stage further. He uses ballroom dancing as a metaphor for sexual growth, and depicts this stylized dance form, with its strict conventions, as a



area packed with gaudy creativity and free expression. He also sees it as a puritanical struggle between youth and authority.

The optimism which is so appealing in *Strictly Ballroom* comes from the working strength of an amalgam of myth and fairytale. David and Goliath, Jack the Giant Killer, Cinderella, even Sleeping Beauty. Goliath is shown when the Federation President is exposed as corrupt and a showman. Cinderella, Scott's dancing partner Fran (Tara Morice), is transformed from a nobody into a somebody when she dons the wise advice of her Spanish grandmother, while the first person awakened from his polygynous funk is the Federation's Scott's father, Doug (Merv Odo), who encouraged his son to marry.

These fables thus give the film an unusual appeal, but the European romances are vehicles only. What gives the film its specific appeal is its Australian content, which comes to seeing the world through Australian eyes.

Luhrmann, who is a director of theatre and opera, stages his film with all the lush, gaudy brightness of a Hollywood spectacle. From behind a red curtain bombarded with twinkling Disneyesque stars, disaster is seen in elaborate, striking poses in the manner of "The Blue Danube." The curtains flutter apart to reveal the characters dramatically garbed and costumed, and bathed in bright light. The women's heavily made-up faces are writhed in erotic ecstacy, while the men, poker straight, look absurdly smug and content. Any woman can expect to see a greasing Norma Gunston grab the mike. Instead, prima officia is unrepresented by Lee Kendall (Peter Whittle) in powder-blue jacket and glistening white wig, while in the background the President glowers darkly beneath eyebrows as heavily winged as Robert

at Cannes



LEFT: MARK LILLEY AS LARRY, DIRECTOR, WITH PRODUCER, RICHARD PATERSON, AND DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, GUY MARSHALL. ABOVE: ROBERT DE NIRO AS LARRY, AND KAREN KUEHN AS MARY, IN THE AUSTRALIAN FILM 'MURDER ON THE LINE'.

assumed a debt of \$3000, which unless he repays within three days will result in him forfeiting his recently purchased and devalued Holden car.

Like Australia, Lantry's life is at a crossroads, and much of the pleasure of the film lies in observing the interplay of behaviour between Lantry, struggling to get his act together in difficult times, and his boss at the club, old RSL member who had the charge of his son, and Rikyu (Kanako Matsuyama), a Japanese member who presents a challenge to the leveling experience of one old World War II warrior (Sydney Corry) - difficult to handle.

Gremgloping has much to offer the performances of Leslie and Henreid are engaging and warm, though Max Cullen's *Teen Skin Baby*, is full of touches of delightful humour (including a droll-looking magpie that forces the bowler to wear plastic fastened to his head), and, with affection for the old guard that it deserves, it succeeds in capturing a moment in time in Australia's move from an Anglo-Celtic past into an uncertain multi-cultural future. What's pity, then, that the film is spoilt by technical faults. Whether by design or error in the colour grading, indoor sequences in natural colour are at odds with garish outdoor sequences that at times look blurred. This one matching, deliberate or otherwise, is distracting to an otherwise enjoyable movie moment.

Multiculturalism and racial mix was a theme one way or another in over half of the ten Australian and New Zealand films viewed at Cannes.

Stevie Bellman uses German and Spanish culture as a yard stick against which to unfavourably measure Australian Anglo-

Menino'. Above all the focus the banner: "WOLVATASH CHAMPIONSHIPS".

Australians are good at sending themselves up. Social and political satire and theatrical surrealism have become Australian stock in trades, thanks to the talents of filmmakers such as Barry Humphries, Barry Dickson, John Clarke, Max Cullen and others. The de-linking of pretension and idea, along with a deeply embedded distrust of authority, has been responsible for the emergence in Australian culture of a distinctive style of lampooning and parodying woes. In everyday life, where this impulse to cut down to size is manifested in the self-pity syndrome, it can be cruel. In film, it is generally more benign and propitiatory, as in *Skinny Dallous*, where the bias of race against authoritarianism, prejudice and stabilizing conformity is blunted by the film's good intentions and irrepressible good spirits.

David Gatt's *Overkill* is another film which pokes fun at competition, power and privilege. The small town has a quirky script and treats some of the major issues confronting a changing Australia - rising debt, declining standards of living and fears about the competitive Japanese - in an amusing way.

Lantry (Mark Lilley) is a good-natured, not overly bright Aussie bartender employed as the gatekeeper at a local bowling club, who dreams one day that the green which he waters religiously, and of which he is very proud, is turning brown in large patches. This isn't his only problem: his father, bored wife, Sue (Lou Headley), who makes dogs and watches television all day in her dressing gown, has



Australian Films at Cannes



1995: *THE LAST DAYS OF CHEN-NEST*. BETH (JENNIFER PEYTON), JOHN (BRUNO GAZZI). DIRECTED BY CLIFFORD COOPER AND MARTIN POLK HOBBS. ©1995 MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LEE/WHITE PINE PRODUCTIONS. STYLING: DEBORA PAGET. HAIR: KAREN BROWN. MAKEUP: JANE DAVIS. PROPS: HELEN RABECK. COSTUME: JENNIFER PEYTON. PRODUCTION DESIGNERS: JENNIFER PEYTON AND MARTIN POLK HOBBS. ©1995 MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LEE/WHITE PINE PRODUCTIONS. STYLING: DEBORA PAGET. HAIR: KAREN BROWN. MAKEUP: JANE DAVIS. PROPS: HELEN RABECK. COSTUME: JENNIFER PEYTON.

Celtic culture, which is seen within the film's theme of infidelity as closed and repressive, lacking spontaneity and warmth.

In Clifford Armstrong's *The Last Days of Chen-Nest*, the cross-cultural marriage between an Australian writer and an expatriate Frenchwoman can be seen as a commentary on the tyranny of both geographic and psychological distance. More properly, however, it highlights the difficulty of exploring in an Australian context traditional European themes such as extramarital sex and angst, without first transplanting them into a contrasting Australian version.

Armstrong's film, from an original screenplay by Helen Carter, focuses on Beth (Jenniffer Peyton), the well-maintaining but busy head of an inner-city family, which includes her husband, Jean-Pierre (Bruno Gazzi), who is feeling increasingly displaced in Australia; her sister Vicki (Lerry Fox), who has just returned from an extended stay in Europe, and her teenage daughter, Anna (Miranda Ober), Beth's brother-in-law needs a writer and her desire to control the lives of others. She is also trying to work through her relationships with her dominating father (Bill Hunter); at the same time as her marriage to JP is collapsing, and she is surprised when she discovers, on return from an outback holiday with her inebriate father, that she has suddenly lost the power to run other people's lives.

The last days of Chen-Nest is a musical comedy which misses the mark. Some of that has to do with patchy acting and a lack of clear definition as to what makes the characters really tick, but much of it is the fault of the script, which feels contrived, despite the story being intrinsically interesting and grounded in reality. Chen-Nest is a chamber piece about people struggling to make meaning from their lives. The insecurities of the characters are 'European' and faceted, understandably so considering who they are, yet too many scenes in the film, particularly those framed within Beth's disordered surface house – the problems of her behaviour and artistic self – are hampered by dialogue which sounds self-consciously artificial and pretentious.

The most successful scenes in the film are those which are more ordinary: for example, the tense family scene at lunch in Beth's parents' house in suburban Sydney, or the long, frequently-interrupted outback sequence where the absolute beauty of the landscape is allowed to underline the psychological distance separating father and daughter.

Hunter here plays the quintessential Australian, reticent about articulating ideas when his daughter asks him what he thinks about God and death, and measured of affection. He replies laconically on trout, warlike, confraternal sort of distlebed or embitteredness, which is iniquitous beyond language. It is not that Australians do not think about or discuss at length serious issues, it is simply that we dislike talking about them without first masking our feelings with irony and self-parody. This reticence and suspicion of disengagement of social interaction. Films such as *The Last Days of Chen-Nest*, which ignore or fail to accommodate this subtleties, do not ring true.

It is worth noting that Ray Argall's *Sight Bell*, though less successful in many ways than his previous film, *Reyes Home*, demonstrates that contemporary social changes, such as the acceptance of changing sex roles and the softening of Australian mores, are by no means incompatible with this perversity and, in most Australian sensibilities, appealing propensity to be suspicious of ideas. The recent presence of Australian women comedians, alone without exception all female, is another reminder of how quickly powerful international cultural shifts can be given an Australian flavor.

Australian culture is not quarantined from what is happening elsewhere. But as Ben Lawerence commented after the success of his film at Cannes, distance, geographic and cultural, makes us different.

Geoff Wright's *Rough Rider*, a violent film which depicts a skin-head racist nightmarish creeping antisemitism in the western suburbs, threatening to overwhelm Australian society as the 'Asian Invaders' continue unabated in recessionary times, is



another Antipodean version of a world-wide preoccupation with the re-emergence of neo-Nazis. This time there is less Australianism and the arguably civilising capacity of Australian comic humour is completely missing. For this reason, the film's selling is failing. This is not, however, sufficient reason for arguing that the film shouldn't have been made, as one Australian critic, David Stratton, was apparently moved to say.

Ronja Stanger is appalled because it is convincing. Wright may well be had in low with the energy and violence he deploys on the screen, but in his development of the narrative and treatment of character it is clear that he is not mimicking an argument in favour of antisocial and racist behaviour, as some critics have suggested. Rather, he delineates with great skill the situations that can trigger explosions of violence among nihilistic, dispossessed

and abused youths, and profiles with accuracy the homoerotic self-hatred that lies behind the burning down of many charismatic fascists leaders to destroy the world (Hans, played with repressed power by Russell Crowe).

There is nowhere to be found in *Ronja Stanger* the pathos associated with the killing that has blighted several Australian films recently, and Wright is able to handle rapid mood shifts and complex character development – specifically the relationship between Cobie (Jacqueline McMenamy) and Derry (Daniel Pollock) without jarring the film's relentless rhythm. The film's vision is ugly, and is depicted as being so.

The contention that anti-Nazi *Ronja Stanger* can incite and encourage violence and racism is a serious one, albeit unproven. This is an important debate, growing in prominence, which deserves serious discussion.

Two films by New Zealanders now based in Australia were screened at the Official Selection at Cannes: Alfonso MacLean's *Onaji*, a slow film about a car crash and the tangled lives of three women and one man, all of them unconvincing characters despite the charms of the film's female lead, played by Marisa Cop Havers; and Vincent Ward's *Map of the Human Heart*, a flood blockbuster about an Irish labourer, Avik (Jason Scott Lee), whose path in life crosses that of another migrant, a half-Cree Indian girl called Alberta with whom he meets and meets again years later in London during World War II.

Map of the Human Heart has some breathtaking moments, including spectacular polar photography by Eduardo Serra, and a stirring recreation of the bombing of Dresden. No doubt further editing will trim away some of the more expendable parts of the film's unwieldy plot (the appearance at the end of Avik's daughter, for example), but nothing substantially can make up for the muddling of Anna Pavlina as the adult Alberta, whose empty performance is in stark contrast to the captivating naturalism of the younger Alberta (Acacia Colligan). ■



1971: ANNE MCKEE (bottom right) with JANE FONDA, RUEBEN DAVIDSON AND ROBERT DUVALL IN *ONE FINE MORNING*; JUDI DENCH ASINGING IN THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ WANER; HELEN MIRREN, LUCILLE BALL, BOBBY DRISKE AND ALBERTINA MARIE PAVLINA IN VINCENT WARD'S *MAP OF THE HUMAN HEART*



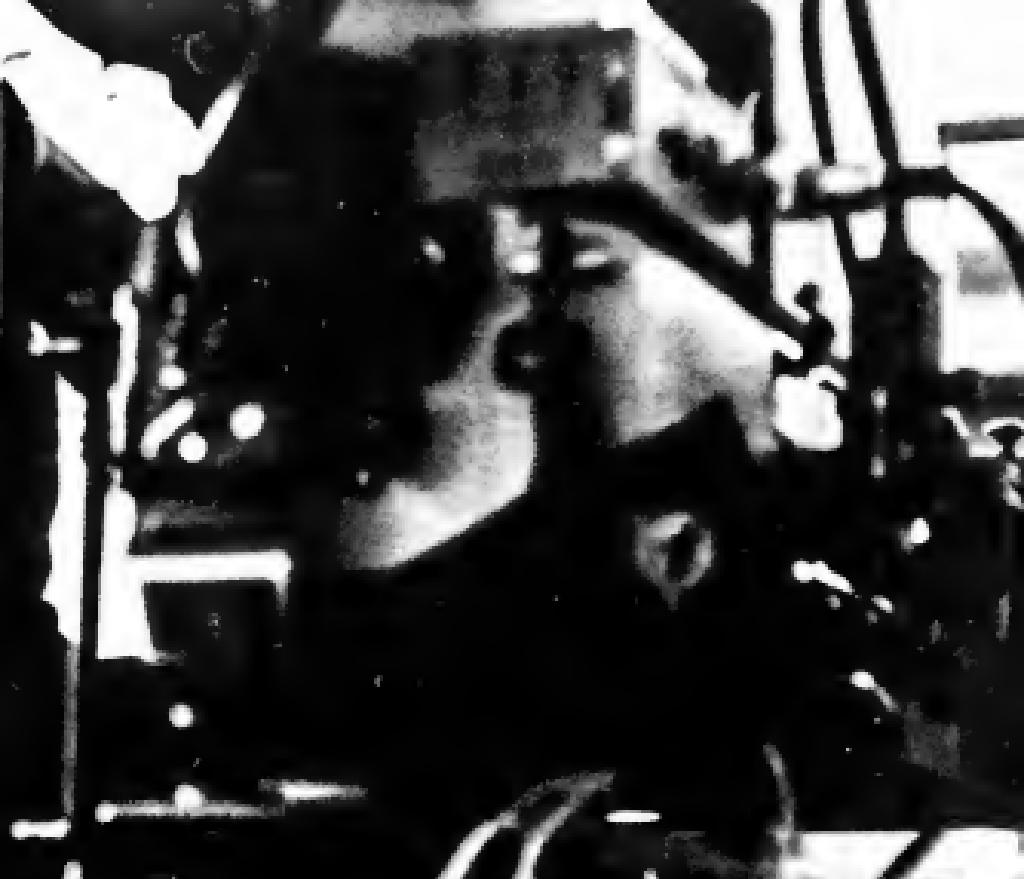
Damn Fox

**David Lynch's
Twin Peaks:**

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Walk With Me

THE PRESS CONFERENCE



THE TWIN Peaks Film Walk With Me press conference of Cannes festival director and co-writer David Lynch, co-writer Robert Englund, actor Michael J. Anderson (who plays the Man From Another Place), cameraman Anatole Broyard and French producer Jean-Claude Rémy from CINITY 2000.

As is often the case, the press conference was chaired by Hervé Bihan, a French journalist and critic who, apart from his long association with Cannes, has just written (with Carl Bernstein) a particularly witty and readable book on the Festival, *Hollywood on the Riviera: The Inside Story of the Cannes Film Festival*.

The following transcription follows as closely as possible the actual press conference. Where questions were asked in French, this is noted, but only Hervé Bihan's English translation is given. The text has been edited for less than is usual to keep as much of the flavour as possible.

Obviously, questions posed by journalists whose first language is not English are not always grammatically straightforward; equally, David Lynch has an unusual way with English.

It is a requirement at all press conferences that journalists identify themselves before asking a question, not in every case names were not given; in others, the names were so mangled transcription was impossible. Thus, for consistency's sake, all names are deleted. (Incidentally, the Australian journalist referred to at one point is not this writer but from ABC television.)

If David Lynch seems less forthcoming than one might expect, the poor reception (thundering and boozing) when he entered may have been partly to blame. Apparently, though, Lynch was unaware of the negative response his film had just received at the press screening in the Grand Palais.



David Lynch

Mr David Lynch, I have a two-part question to ask you. The first part: When you started to make the film, what did you really want—need, to do in a series which has been all around the world? The second part is: For those people who did not know anything about *Twin Peaks* series, do you think the film is understandable? From the beginning, we are supposed to know who the characters are.

Answer: I supposed to be in love with the world of *Twin Peaks* and the characters that exist there. I wanted to go back into the world before I started on the series and to see what was there, to actually see things that we had [only] heard about.

There is a danger, of course, that the more you know about anything, the more depth of appreciation you can get from it. [sic] But I think, although I have been wrong many

times have been on *Blue Velvet*? And Mr Henry, did you give David Lynch carte blanche and a free hand?

[Henry responds in untranslate French. "Then sure, ...", the point being that Lynch and all the directors working within CIBY 2000 have a free hand.]

Answer: I don't particularly [sic] François as well, but I feel very free, very free.

Mr David Lynch, many characters from the television series are not in this movie, like Audrey. Why?

Answer: There are different reasons. Some names were shared they couldn't otherwise the story. And some characters, even in the script, didn't find themselves in the story. It was a little bit of a sadness because I would have liked to have everybody there, but they didn't have a bearing on the life of Laura Palmer so much as for the movie.

Mr Lynch, I really loved your film and I would like to ask one question for you. The first question: What is reality for you?

[Laughter from audience and Lynch]

Answer: In 25 words or less.

Answer: I haven't got a clue what is reality. I'm sure I'll be surprised when I learn what it is.

My second question is whether we can consider your film an anti-drugs film?

Answer: Well, yes...you know, you could look at it that way if you would like to. [Laughs.]

[Rousseau] You have a very young following, Mr Lynch. Are you not afraid to make drugs seem desirable? There is a line in the film which says "All young Americans..."

Answer: Half...Half! [Laughs.]

"Half of the youth in America are on drugs."

Answer: That was a little bit of a joke.

It is very dangerous. If my child's went to upset anyone, we would make films about strong, but even then could be dangerous. [Laughs.]

It's not hard to say. But I think, finally, is a film is how the balance is and the feelings are.

Film must because we can go and have experiences that would be pretty dangerous or strange for our real life. We can generate a room and walk into a dream. It doesn't necessarily follow that you are going to go out and start shooting bullets or taking coke. You

worry about it. But I think there has to be these contrasts and strong things within a film for the total experience.

I have a question for Mr Lynch, and maybe one for Mr Radchenko. Congratulations on the film. I had the impression at the end of it that what David Lynch was perhaps an American nightmare, rather than the American dream. Can you comment on that?

Answer: That's a good impression that you got. [Laughs.]

The life (?) of the American dream appears always in film. We are very aware of the idea of the film. You are playing with the whole idea of family and social connections. Are you trying to attack the American dream?

Answer: No, I was trying to make the story of Terence Beale [who is murdered in the world] and the last seven days of Laura Palmer. [Applause.]

Mr Radchenko, to see this film also has elements of horror, and gothic horror. In your writing of the score, did you consider that as an element of the film?

Answer: Actually, I think the scoring is more darkish than horrific. We simply pass through the darkness of the music. At least, that is what the intention was.

David Lynch, as a filmmaker, do you feel any responsibility for putting such violence in your movies?

Answer: That is the same answer I'm going to give you that the other gentlemen go into. I think that is very dangerous [...] that we are attacking films for violence and not doing a whole lot in the world for violence. Film is a



1. CIBY2000 three years deal with Lynch (and the French/English Company « The Blue Lagoon » co-producer). One main programme "2000" of CIBY 2000 in French to get the stories

soft place to have experiences. Violence seems to have a major part in a lot of fantastic stories. But [the film] was championing violence is would be one thing, but I don't think it is.

I believe in very strong films and I don't apologize to them one bit, as long as there is a balance in the story.

(French) I like the film very much and I haven't seen the television series.

(French) Fabulous. I will have a lunch with you later on. (Laughs.)

(French) Question to the scriptwriter and to Mr David Lynch. What influence did working with familiar characters have on the writing, the scoring and the directing?

(French) Writing for a film as opposed to writing for a television series does I feel this much different. You're obviously not restricted by an hour and 1/2 pages to an act. But other than that, it was the same people and you have more time and can be more intense about these people.

(French) Mysteriously speaking, it might be a slight break from just a little longer than the approach on the television series. But very similar to the characters and the style.

(French) What was the question?

[The question is repeated.]

(French) It didn't affect it so very much at all. There are obviously some things we couldn't do on television that we did in the film, but I was always curious as how much we could do on television. As well, we were shooting the whole series in film, editing it in film and making it just on film, so the differences were not so great.

Mr Lynch, given [your responses to] most of the other questions this morning, and from talking to you in the postscript after press conferences on other films, I know that when people raise issues about the symbolism that we think we see in your film you like to let things slide. You have good answers and you're very clever. A couple of examples of that this morning were when the Australian professor was asking about whether this was the American nightmare versus the

American dream. I personally have great discomfort at the end of the film because of what I see as a sort of political, religious, right-wing attitude to the end of the story. Now, I may be making that up in my mind. The point is that I feel that we are not allowed to ask you these questions because we won't get answers. And I am wondering if it is because you won't talk about it or you don't want to think about it?

(French) I don't like to give my interpretation because... um, um, because if I was required, you'd have to make up your own interpretation of what you see on the screen. And, uh, I have my own version of everything and when I'm working I answer three myself. But what I mean you must first understand it and everyone is allowed to enjoy their own interpretation. And I'm against kind of film that would make absolutely one interpretation available.

I think it is fair to say that everyone is in love with *Twin Peaks* [the series] except a few select folks who have Nathan's bones in their kitchen back room. What can we expect for the future of *Twin Peaks* on television and could you also give us a brief description on what is happening with "Romantic Rocker" and "One Silver Bubble"?

(French) I can tell you probably for sure that *Twin Peaks* on television is gone. But, like I said earlier on, I love this world. The pity is not on whether or not we will ever be able to go on there again. But for me there are still open-ended ideas, and I'd be excited every time I find out what could be going on.

Now, what was the other question?



What is happening with "Romantic Rocker" and "One Silver Bubble"?

(French) I'm not going to do "Romantic Rocker", or at least I'm not going to do it right away. I think it may be doing "One Silver Bubble". But I've not yet finished putting on that. "One Silver Bubble" is mysterious, surreal, but funny kind of film.

I would like to hear the actual voice of Mr Ardenman. I was also wondering if you could explain the shooting of the dinner sequence. The atmosphere of that dinner is amazing.

(French) Well, here's my normal voice. (Laughs.)

What was the second part shot? Do you never technically? We had someone reading the lines straight forwards and I would translate them backwards and we would film that backwards. Then, when we showed it forwards the negatives made a positive.

(Anderson then gives example of speaking backwards. Cheers.)

(French) Mr Lynch, by reading, reading characters from series that you have made, is it either a lack of inspiration or you wanted that kind of atmosphere?

(French) Well, I think that there are some things in there which, in my opinion, are fairly original and, as I said before, have the characters and the world. When we started writing this thing, we didn't think of it as rehashing some old thing. We thought about going back into a certain world we love and enjoying a story there. It was, for me, an incredible place to be.



David Lynch

Mr Bakshi said, do you think you continue the tradition of Maxinean?

DAVID LYNCH That's quite a compliment.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Are you going to score *Twin Peaks* again?

DAVID LYNCH No, I'm not that efficient. I like doing maybe three films score a year and some television and *Beyond*. I try to pack my properties very carefully.

But *Mormon* is great, absolutely.

(Unintelligible question, which began "Mr Lynch, never underestimate a [1] country, what have you learned from score countries...")

[Lynch looks at Henry Böhm.]

HENRY BOHM Don't look at me! [Laughs.]

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN What was that question once again?

The movie country is [PPG] country, so what have you learned from this movie for your own [PPG] country...?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN I'm sorry, I can't help you with the answer! [Laughs.]

Another question: How do you choose actors for a work with?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Well, when you have a party and you invite a certain guy, you picture a certain look and you enter into a casting session with the idea of finding that person who will fit that role. And, like by like by like, the others are weeded out and the right person is right in front of you and sweep you go.

I don't really people create their perform anything. I just talk to them. I like to work with a person called Johnson Bay who brings me in very good people. It's just sometimes more of the right person for each role.

I am trying to write a thesis about your work used in your movies, except for *Twin Peaks* [1], the another is always no [1] the dark side and in *Twin Peaks* it is the Other. Is it because he has to show some sexual relations with Laura or what?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Again, I'll get into it with you some other way.

Which character in *Twin Peaks* is closest to you?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Ah, I don't know — Gordon Cole (whom Lynch plays in the film).

I just think you're deaf [like Gordon Cole].

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN No, but sometimes, like this gentleman and back here, I present I'm deaf.

I have another question, about the

women. There is a special part in *Twin Peaks* (the sex scene) which is like a part in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (porno movie). Is it the same?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN No.

The galant?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN No.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN How do you score a sex scene. Mr Bakshi?

DAVID LYNCH With your consent. [Laughs.] I think you capture the mood of the scene and let the music flow with it.

DAVID LYNCH, There two questions. The first is that violent films are becoming more and more a normal thing in Hollywood. I would like to know how you feel about violence, especially in your films where the violence is mostly very explicit and particularly in *Twin Peaks*, I think, because it is shown as a very violent way.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Well, I don't know why there violence in American films? probably because there is a lot of violence everywhere in the art. And I think that when people get serious they pick up whatever is around them and the story starts unfolding in your mind.

Like I said before, I believe in balance: I believe in violence but don't want to champion violence. I believe that a film should have suspense, and I believe that a film is a place where you can go and have an experience, like reading a book.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN But do you feel it is a very sulfate? If you followed the television series, you know what happened to Laura Palmer and all you are waiting for in the film is the murder. That is basically the storyline when is she going to die.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN And a lot of hate throughout the way, too. But you do know that she is probably going to die, yes.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN (translated over phone)
How much did you write in?



My other question is: Do you feel inspired by the American B-movie generation such as the 1930s films and the exploitation films of the 1960s and '70s? I find a lot of your work comes from that. Is that true?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN I don't know. I do believe in a certain atmosphere in B-films.

DAVID LYNCH, what do you love in the world of *Twin Peaks*?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN I love the mood and the characters. I love the possibilities for scores. There's a magical thing that can take place in my mind in that world. It's inspiring to me.

DAVID LYNCH, is there an intention of parody in the way the sound effects are used?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Ah, no.

I heard this question asked in Berlin of Mr Bakshi: I would also like your opinion, Mr Lynch. What do you have more pleasure shooting: horror scenes or suspense scenes?

DAVID LYNCH I like to shoot all different kind of scenes and that's part of the thing, the measure and the mood. Almost any kind of scene I just have to follow there and try to make it as real as possible. I wouldn't choose one particular type of scene over something else. I like pretty much everything.

I would like to follow on from an earlier question about Mr Lynch saying that he loves the world. If this is true, why do most of the characters have such miserable and fucked lives?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN I think there are opportunities for strange exchanges and interesting human interactions in this world. I would have to sit down, maybe with a psychiatrist for a long time until you exactly why I like it, but I really do like it.

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN Mr Lynch, when you decided to do a long film on *Laura Palmer*, was it because you

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN I think the answer for having spent the drama series in a camp?

MARKUS LÖWENSTEIN No. Shelly Lee, who plays *Laura Palmer*, was hired to be a dead girl lying [in] the beach [seriously near hand]. It turns out, at least in my opinion, she's an unbearable actress and there are things that she does in this movie that are truly terrible. I haven't seen too many people get into a role and give it so much. So, the big news for me was this person hired to be a dead girl turns out to be a great actress and a perfect *Laura Palmer*.

DAVID LYNCH, Please obviously you are a

"I'm not a real film buff. Unfortunately, I don't have time."

[...] I become very nervous when I go to a film because I worry so much about the director and it is hard for me to digest my popcorn."

DAVID LYNCH

very busy man, but I was wondering if you took time out to see films. What sort of films have you seen lately and how has seen any sort of influence on those films that you consider has possibly come from your films?

Lynch: I'm not a real film buff. Unfortunately, I don't have time; I just don't go. And I become very nervous when I go to a film because I worry so much about the director and it is hard for me to digest my popcorn. [Laughs.]

Leaven: So I can't tell you if anyone has been influenced by me.

Mr Lynch and Robert Rodriguez, late twentieth-century literary icons that not only are we able to enjoy the written word but also relish the screen. We are fascinated with screen images and I was wondering if both of you are fondly aware of that fact when you both write and direct?

Leaven: I'm not sure what you're asking.

Today we are much more image literate than before. There is much more study of form going on. You can happily say that you are going to sit and read a film now without people going, "What's wrong with you?" And you make postmodernist design projects. You can't do a David Lynch film. I'm wondering if you come to it from the other end, thinking about what you're making?

Crowe: There is a language of film which I have always had a certain anguish about. It's this formal which has been hanging off the edges of cinema alive for 40 years and that's why it's the best film festival in the world because it gets the language of film and celebrates it.

We heard from the film seller referred first in Japan. Did the success of the television series in Japan put ...?

Leaven: I think Jean-Claude [Henry] would have to answer that. I know the series is extremely popular in Japan, but it is another place as well. I don't know why they got it first.

Another question: Why did you decide to shoot the story of Laura Palmer? Do you think that with the shooting of this story as a film it will be a certain outcry about the mystery that was aroused around the world during your serial?

Crowe: I don't think so, no.

[Horn blits then into Playboy in the background] I believe that it just happened that way because we were available.]



TRAILER PARK BOYZ star ROBERT RODRIGUEZ (left) and DINGARDO (right)

Mr Lynch, I have read that Kyle MacLachlan was really afraid as he only knew his and only known for this character Dale Cooper and that he was not very enthusiastic about playing the movie. Is that true? And another question: Are you allowed to become known as the *Twin Peaks* master in the future?

Lynch: It is very tough for an actor, I think, to find a role that everyone loves them in and they want to break out and show they can do other things. I think that Kyle is finally realizing that he can do anything else he wants and that people love him as Dale Cooper so maybe he should be very happy about that.

In the very beginning he was scared of doing the series, because we'd done 20 hours and he didn't know if he wanted to go on and do it again. But then finally he decided that he would still do it, even. He didn't want to do *Star Wars*, either. He turned it down, then thought about it and changed his mind a couple of times.

It is very tough trying to make a decision to buy into something for a year and have to go on the screen and all that. So, he had to think about it some.

[Laughs] Without passing a moral judgement, many would probably define you as a very perverse director. Would you agree?

Crowe: I think perverse things are interesting and counterintuitive and interesting. Like cocaine, like acid. Like perversion and non-perversion, both things.

Let's say you're the campaign strategist for the Democratic or Republican party. You take the right poll analysis and see the movie. Would you come out of there thinking this was good for your campaign or bad, which may be another way of asking how you think Americans will see the film in terms of the political and social climate?

Leaven: Just as you see from the press conference, there have been many different interpretations and feelings about anything we see these days. You can't please all the people and everybody is different. Democra... is going to see the picture would come out with a different feeling, most likely. It's the same all the world over.

Mr Lynch, I'm interested in the use of dead pan humour throughout your work. There seems to be more of it in the series than in the movie. In the series, you encourage a complicity with the audience; they don't like they are in on something. That is part of why it was so popular. So why do you have less of it in the movie? And why is it that you are one of the few directors who wants everyone to have a separate opinion about your work?

Crowe: It isn't that everyone must have a completely separate one, but they have to have their own opinion.

There is less humour in the film because the story is very serious. *Hannibal* has a place in a parlor, but you have to know sort of emotionally where that place is and where it isn't. But *Birds* and *I went* laughing while we were setting many traps, at various places.

Crowe: It goes back to the story, I think. You pick out the story you are trying to tell. It's the same with characters that are on the screen that aren't in the story. We chose to tell this story and that's how it comes out.

Lynch: I think humour is like electricity. You work with what you don't understand how it works. It's an enigma.

David Lynch, would you tell me the purpose of the dream sequences in the film and in the series?

Crowe: No, not now. [Laughs]

It is an integral part of the film. Why did you feel it was important to use a lot of [XXX] really?

Crowe: [Long pause] Well, for me, and I think for pretty much everybody that's ever been, there's a feeling that there might be something like subversive parasites roaming that we can't see and it's up to maybe a few other things out there and that a little openness could exist and we could go somewhere else. And this kind of idea motivates me.

Crowe: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.

Crowe: Thank you very much.

[Applause. Conference ends.]

Literature-Film connection

THREE FILMS REVIEWED

Orson Welles once said, "I believe you must say something new about a book, otherwise it is best not to touch it." The dispiriting talk, at almost every level, about "faithful" adaptations of literature into film suggests that Welles' view is not widely shared.

Again and again one hears a film praised for capturing the "spirit" or "essence" of the novel or play concerned, rarely does one hear of a film failing wholly to do its inventiveness in approaching a work of literature. Such approaches are more usually regarded as violations of varying degrees of reverence. This film review which follows (given in the order in which the films were seen) nevertheless suggests a wide spectrum of literature-film dialogue. *Our Own Private Idaho* (1991) is a loose adaptation of Shakespeare in the strands of telling a story of alienated and rootless contemporary youth. James Joyce's elegant *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1991) has page to screen with, it seems, the minimum directorial intervention. *Julius Caesar* (1970), Jarmusch's gay police-verbalized Marlowe's nearly silent play.

All three of these films have their commendable merits, but if the first and third are infinitely more exciting as films it is perhaps because they appear to have caught in Welles' words, to "say something new" about the original text. The second is a film decidedly not about the key narrative events of its precursor and yet to some like "true" books, it can the level of narration – those strategies by which the narrative events are related, disrupted, contrasted – that such "newness" is likely to be achieved. It is on this level that Von Stroheim and Jarmusch have dared to level whereas Welles has been content to follow.

Writing of Peter O'Toole's *Henry V*, the 1980 television adventure derived from *The Merchant of Venice*, Pauline Kael wrote: "It's a phony film... [which] in some of Shakespeare's dialogue 'Well, Gus' Von Stroheim has done exactly what in *My Own Private Idaho* his beautiful muckraking remaking of terms of Shakespeare achieves from Aronofsky/Peterson/Peretti and the result is to deepen considerably his restlessness of hot film."

Is not *Idaho* *My Own Private Idaho*? Is it an adaptation of Shakespeare's history plays? Rather it belongs with those other films which seem to see Shakespeare as a starting point – films as diverse as Joseph Mankiewicz's *House of Strangers* (1959),

remade as in *Witness*, Edward Gribbon's *Julius Caesar* (1953), both showing an king clear in their representation of plucky citizens' difficult relationship with their benevolent, easily swayed, Emilia (Desdemona, 1951) to reworking Othello in *All Night Long*, with the word of London jazz and from *The Tempest* again Peter Greenaway's 1985 film *Prospero's Books* and possibly William Wellman's 1944 *Witness for the Prosecution*.

The ultimate of each with the previous classic may understandably but none could be described as an invention in the strict sense of the word. What they offer, in their diverse modes and in different contexts, is a level of commentary or reflection upon the text/play. They have recognized some essence of the original which is appropriate their purpose, but sometimes as in My Own Private Idaho, they can knock one into a productive re-thinking of the play in question.

It is no doubt possible to enjoy – to respond to – *My Own Private Idaho* without knowing the text. Henry IV (play) is also done briefly on Falstaff's death from Henry V. However, it will almost certainly enrich experience for those who choose the plays and perhaps little puzzling to those who don't. This is partly because the whole texture of Wholeness-in-Disguise with only slight accommodation to late twentieth-century film. The effect is not one of jolting inappropriateness but of reaching screen continuities and continuing to find the continuity of human dilemmas. Warmth and tenderness are as likely to be maintained in experience in *Idaho* as in the court of Shakespeare's Henry IV.

Reactions do not happen in a vacuum. They are always reacting other stories and there is no reason why a film (or play or novel) should not require its viewers to know something more than just what is set before them. Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is based on a background that included James Joyce and *The Importance of Being Earnest* and whose characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead makes it anyone ignorant of *Hamlet* something constantly about small lives caught between "highly opposed" but a groundlessness for how who can also see it as a kind of another myth what is part of our cultural baggage.

The inventiveness of *My Own Private Idaho* indicates not only shakespearean but Oscar-winner Charles deMille's *Highwayman* brought to one changes on the "Henry" plays as to to extract and foreground the story of Falstaff. Indirectly he celebrated some of those startling images of the malice of less as embodied in the growth of the despised Prince Hal as he moves, towards his avowal to the Disney in *Henry V* and the irreducible rejection of Falstaff. Before the film is over,

lections

Mal (Sam Rock) is death both his actual father, the coldly manipulative King, and his surrogate father, Falstaff. Having been an unsatisfactory son to the former, he is now an unsatisfactory son to the latter who can have no place in his new life. This is the major narrative line which Sam has borrowed from Shakespeare and Melville. *My Own Private Idaho* is very much a film about young men in search of paternal figures.

It is also a film about the search for home, an aspiration at the core of which is a good home might be just what I need. The lead character, Tom (Tom Cruise), the lost young hero to the Mayor of Portland, Oregon, is on the one hand a visibly apologetic misfit, in which the self-allowed his outstanding personal physique is paired with high-cultured elegance. On the other hand, there is a determinedness which suggests the social burdens predicted over by the mostly Falstaff figures Bob (Matthew Modine), and a Mississippian who only vaguely identifies himself as Lightfoot (very eloquently played by Sally Struthers). Sucks is called back to report to his father and, without assuming the Mayor, who calls him a "degenerate", "Don't say that father. You did this, it is not true."

At this point, I should make clear that there is another non-Shakespearean strand to the narrative. Bob's friend and fellow hustler, Miles (Mike Proffitt), is some suspect like the Duke of Prince Hal's court. In *Henry IV Part 1*, it is Miles who suggests the plot to toe Falstaff and his sloborous allies they have subtlety written pages with the sense of relishing the "immense fun" Falstaff will have in all my Clean Private Idaho, the two young men carry off the mercantile robbery and Mr. Sam at this point offers a close reading of the Shakespearean line: "Do you think I would tell the fair report?" asks Bob/Miles, but follows it with "You think I would tell you about you."



our only tool out of here." That is the spurs but much more explicitly the opportunity/expectations of the Falstaff figure. Miles, however, has other purposes in mind. He respects and loves every feel that the Duke's weakness is that it doesn't quite satisfy that love element.

For Miles, Bob is a young gay hustler, not just a cross-dressing otherness abhorring him merely that Bob charms him for him. Bob's retort ("Two guys can't love each other") is "I sent my ass, the whiny ass doing things for her" (mumble follows). Miles, though, says: "I could love someone if I resented her for it." A complicated case about there is real tenderness in what removes to their love assent as they carry by the side of an Idaho road (Bob is calculating his chances; he does return to her/his hustler apprenticeship from time to time, but he does also have real affection for Miles). And it is this a story which frames the film.

Miles is transposed, it is clearly implied, giving added depth to the first image of the film and the second image in which he is a conceptual being freed from an image past into our life — whom? Bob? Anyone in particular?

And the film ends on this enigmatic note in relation to Miles. Unlike Shylock, Miles is free, in problematics at best. When the narratology assess him, he has "lyrically beautiful but tantalizing dreams of the mother and of a shabby theme house in a small town. He finds who his father is because he is ignorant that he is whatever finds him. The dreams, a makeshift plastic tent on a hilltop apartment building, the number hotel there are where he sleeps, but he is haunted by miles as much as houses. Only seemingly a sort of a roadie in Idaho, his request to Dennis saying, "I just know I've been born before — like the commentaries here. Like a kicked up tree. At the firm's end there is a similar image of the road and Miles's voice-over says, "I'm a connoisseur of the

unseen, unspoken, perhaps hidden, aspects of human nature. A queer, queer place, a queer, queer place, he is an animal, a son, a man, the road, the mother of the road, the road, the road.

leads? "The camera pulls up and back to reveal him lying there. A brick steps down from a pedestal to rest him. *Venice vs. the Desdoffs*" is heard on the soundtrack. Then a car comes by and he is lifted inside, and the final image is a time-lapse shot of clouds moving behind the train house.

Miles's unbroken history there binds the film and fits as part of the overall scene that Bob played into. The film denies what Bob will not only intend, Bob ("There was a time when I needed to learn from you...but don't come near me now") but when he will also find Miles in today both secretly and seriously. Does the tea parties meet in the army? While his father returned with formal ceremony there is a hasty withdrawal he offered and left.

The problem is that, structurally, the film seems to insist that it necessarily tell a story whereas in terms of narrative actualization it is Bob's situation which holds the attention most closely. Miles has not turned on us, read the whole film in terms of Shakespeare, but the fact that at the Shakespearean address are extraordinarily important, makes them doomsday-like Miles as they do Bob. His story loses some of its grip. He begins and ends the film, the evocative images of teatime and houses that haunt the film being to set, another part of hisности and (inaptitude) life (Reflections do not guarantee direction) is undeniable, but not even his relationship with Bob is through Miles from all the center of the film with Bob. There is, for instance, nothing as devastating in Miles's intuition as Bob's suspicion of Bob. Bob's temporary abandonment of him (I'm going to take a little time off...Miles! If I sit this you down the road?) works structurally as an operation of the chiasmus of Bob.

However, this is far from being a fully conventional film and perhaps it would be less interesting if it were. Its substance is thereby rather than structural. In Shakespearean England, the beauty



of leadership and human warmth must give way to the constraints of "good government" in America in the 1900s. The beauty of "spacious views and sunlit scenes of green" is usually celebrated and the accompanying losses ironically measured as the culture is transformed plausibly by the soundless. Political correctness on a vast scale has dictated similar sacrifices.

Few films are as pasting and as settling as *Howards End* in its treatment of its historical context. It is hard to see the film as a major new director with more than a touch of the past, more interested in truth than history. He invents (and plays) his dues to both Shakespeare and Wilkie and obstinately evasively handles all other references to the Edwardian Otto Ritter Wilhelms Domes. But in the end he has made something new stamping it with the imprint of his directorial art. It is unusual to need again:

It's odd that the most famous utterance from G. M. Trevelyan's *Howards End*—"Only connect!"—should be omitted from the film. Just because it is part of the novel's discursive prose is no reason to ignore the famous remark about how even a Plain typewriter, and that to myself given to an unilled general who to say my point is that the film characterizes Miss Howells' social understandings as inherently "faulty" and so say misleading and even wilful. In relation to its precursor text that it comes as a shock to find anything so forceful is omitted.

In his final post-Wim Wenders James very often what amounts to a conspicuous gilded edge of the novel, negotiating vulnerability and points of release. It is an aspiration at the other end of the spectrum, however. His relations, from such exciting and problematic nations with literary sources as *Prospectus Books* or *My Own Private Idaho*, it is very much in line with Ivory's *A Room With A View* in his way of taking the novel in his pocket and time. The insipid activist approach as opposed to grasping the novel by the scruff of the neck and shaking her like a rattle, is that it transfers loss and incident to relations rather than to the creation of a coherent life world.

Supposedly it does as it happens film is also incoherence. It begins with Mrs Ruth Wilcox (Dame Judi Dench), walking melancholy round the field gardens of Howards End while in noise comes to being played inside. There is implicitly a failure of connection between the contemplative and the solitary woman and the rest of her family.

The film ends with Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), hopefully of new friends, left in the center of the house. Involved there with her sister Helen (Helen Mirren), Charles and Helene's illegitimate son by the unhappy wife Leonard Bain (John Cusack) has come to visit the site of unconnectedness to one of connectedness. In matters of both class and imagination Margaret

has married Ruth's widower (Anthony Hopkins), thus bringing status and an inheritance of thinking ways of living. Helene's child represents a union consciousness. Margaret herself represents the novel, now perfectly sure what lies in store towards the Hopkins. Learned with his associations to culture and his "common" wife. From this point of view, the ending is more schematic than organic or full.

Nevertheless, the idea of "very connect" is perhaps borne out by the reworking of the novel's last scene of allowing Mrs Wilcox's strongly preoccupied walk in the opening sequence in the garden to have had this closing sequence in which nature and human nature are seen to be at one. This idea is encapsulated too in the final use of images of journeys. Being sent on long journeys of letters written in sepia tones will signify the absent social consciousness. Ruth is sent out by the wife of the wife, Louisa Wilcox, but in the end Margaret, the secondborn Wilcox brings health and the right of intelligent connection to the connecting of her world.

In between the Mrs offers "teaches more Howards End" some realized with wit and probity and feeling. This is particularly true of the scenes between Ruth and Margaret. In their first meeting there is a very clear sense of the separation of Margaret's healthy vitality and the older woman's worn quality, as they discuss the idea of nature versus human nature and the "unconscious" idea of and a house being pulled down. The idea of sympathy between the two women in the novel is juxtaposed to the "solitary" Henry Juddson. In

it is easy to see what attracts the Marianne-Emily-Julia to Foster's novels. It is only surprising that David Lean beat them to the show with *A Passage to India*, the Foster one might have suggested would make the most direct appeal to the team. Throughout their careers, whether in the individual films such as *Autumn Story* or *Portrait of a Lady* or *Mulholland Over Georgia* and *Brides of the Wind* or *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, the Marianne-Emily-Julia team to Foster's novels are like Henry James adaptations. *The Europeans* and *The Patagonians*, as well with *Four Weddings*, John Austin in *Mulholland* they are fascinated by the lack of mutually different ways of contact that apparently it may take the form of Indian military parades by amateur Europeans. It may be Europe abroad Americans returning to their New England roots, it may be traditional, those looked in mostly with the intent gazing as in *Howards End*, if they are the sort of those who justify "responsible" British life in being part of "the battle of life" and have thereby become displaying "tireless beneficence". Marianne and Emily have justly shown themselves sensitive to documenting the two sides of human consciousness, urban Howards End perhaps more markedly than in their earlier films. They work towards a teaching sense of reconciliation.

Howards End is a silent or class as well as of imaginative differences. At its best, it reaches these differences through contradiction, state-on-state—through for example the coexistence between the cultured doctor of the *Basuf* basement flat and the Schlegel's comfortable upper-middle-class Marquess Place house or of the semi rural tranquillity of Howards End. Luisa Knight's production design coordinates among these with intricately detailed care. It is also this being an English set drama, a sense of accents and idiomatics and an irreducible cast size to three. But we suggested earlier the Blanks seem to be as crucially important by the time of the film as the novel, only the foolish Helene showing there is real sympathy the validity of which has fully come into operation.

Ivory's taste for the pictorial stage has been a continuing trademark in his literary adaptions since the time of *The Remains* (1990). Sometimes the beauty of his images is dramatically justified as in the forward tracking shots that render Leonard a nervous swirl through twisted woods at night; sometimes it seems merely to nodules in the pastoral banality of Edwardian England banalities own sake.

Even all this visual, three Men (in like the Foster negotiations above, *A Room With A View* and *Edward*) are of course by graceful care and work and a hybrid sense of frame composition. They are also interested in the pleasures of polished acting, often reflecting the traditional affiliations of the cast. In the present time I have no outstanding performances from Vanessa Redgrave (her most eloquent film working year) and Emma Thompson, but right down Redfitt, with similar roles both as those played by Phyllis Coates (*Aunt Jupe*)



ANNE MARION (AS MARGARET SCHLEGEL) AND ANTHONY HOPKINS (AS RUTH WILCOX) IN HOWARDS END

Berber Hicks (West Avery) and Prince Callan (Colin Farrell) are made alive to every nuance of dialogue, to their function in the sexual schema.

If Alvarado's Critique of the homoeroticism, heteronormative Hollywood schema is because of its constant sense of being a threatened artifact, it is as though the body here is too disturbed by the presence of James or Foster to impose itself on the material. Meyer's irony is too effacing as a director to do so, but if so the result may be that he will never achieve anything comparable with the gravitas of Oscar Werner's dealing with Shakespeare (as in *Othello* at Metcalf right) or Keith Tuckerman (The Magnificent Ambersons).

Festive and perceptive as *Hawards Cross* (Mia Farrow's) is, it seems all too consciously aimed at a middle class audience which will appreciate the drama and the fidelity to the medium it really prefers ...

In ensuring that the adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* no sale respectable version of a "classic" (whatever that means today) Derek Jarman has – uncompromisingly – chosen to foreground his gay revolutionaries between Jarman's homoerotic orientation colours his entire reading of the play.

Edward (Steven Waddington) and his "leisure" or "moral" as the play refers to this low-born knave, Piers (Davidson) (Nicholas Turturro) are respectively with the more overtly endearing sympathy than Marlowe accorded them. When Edward has been forced to subscribe to Chaucer's ends the test psychological device to the sum of Sir Philip's "theory that we are godly" runs by Anne Lister. There it turns the politics of an oppressed minority that constitutes the Majoritarian Marlowe suggests of the King a weakness and Gammer's opportunism.

They are specially presented as a polar light just before his tumultuous entry against them; whereas the opposition to their rule in the person of "Chaucer's nobility" succeeds to appear as the forces of darkness. Jarman has used his usual device to the play's "story of love versus response" and to the dismantling of the "class between gay culture and public morality".

He has, that is, established wholly by formal the play a class and made his film understand that come to terms which places its contemporary and personal significance. He has also imagined the original in ways that truly fit group all the previous texts's conflicts and bring forward four points with new – and unusual – power.

Opposition to the central lovers is depicted in almost entirely sympathetic terms. Edwards' queen Bertha (Tilda Swinton) has a hard mythic quality of maternal authority that fits the sympathetic Marlowe allows her, and her lover, Mortimer (Piggy Turturro), as a tribal figure possessed in some remote primitive. The film's entire is affected at a



SHAKESPEARE AND HAWARDS CROSS
STEVEN WADDINGTON AND NICHOLAS TURTURRO

society which survives heteronormative bifurcation reserves its abnegation and hatred for the King's obsession with Chaucer. Chaucer has replaced Marlowe's Doctor as an ambitious noble and best rigs his unromantic greedily clinging resolutions, including two women.)

The shot of Edward and Bertha is finally represented as analogous. Chaucer in the film he has been a little boy playing with a sword as if it were a machine gun, but here an image of the pain which endures his mother and her lover; he recommends the situation in many soft, high-heels and clinging garments that recall her mother's. Arbitrary sexualities have been added following the death of the young prince as reflected in Edward's martyr.

There will probably be criticism that Jarman's reading of Marlowe is simplistic and there is some truth in such a view. As the life cuts between Marlowe's edifying but kind of flagrantly for contradiction interlocked with Edwards and Edward receiving the support of a militant gay crowd writing banners ("Not Your Filthy Laundry Off Our Backs"), it is easy to feel that the issues have been over-simplified. For instance in aligning himself so unequivocally with the King and his lover, Jarman fails understanding the other forces at work, such as those of class and the quest for political ascendancy. However, it is the intense politicisation of the sexual drama that makes Jarman's film a genuine re-interpretation of Marlowe's hyperbolic irony. However they look, the two characters equate as painting by numbers.

And it largely the street-on gay politics – and its place in a wider context of oppression – that allows Jarman's version of a four-hundred-year-old tragedy to seem pertinent today. Whether the spectacle of gay domination is not the sound shafts noise telling us that "The King's life is ending rapidly" as a "sober" predicting his announcement of the death of George VI strikes a discordant note because the Marlowe-style of historical consciousness for such cross-cultural affluence.

Cultures, which include other projects and enterprises, modern comedies and vaguely Renaissance girls are part of such credentialed Chaucerians as dressmakers, psychiatrists and activists

bonds rather than for realism or for a rigid regard for consistency. This is not a mere approach (Michael Bogdanov's brilliant production of *Henry IV* did just this a few years ago for the English Shakespeare Company) but it is reflected out with rigorous care and strict settings, similarly, as later to continue the film is a particular time and place. Its measured and stately sweep, with story hints and echoing corridors, a place of dangerous comedy and threatening sadness, brilliantly lit by camera man Ian Wilson. The result is a genuine fluidity in the film's dealings with time and space that is in one with its sense of the timeless importance of art contexts.

More serious than his alternative adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Jarman's latest brush with classic drama reveals him someone who can add a status and make "something real" when he has had without being overawed by it. At his best, he adds in everything's drive by a poet's diction.

SHAKESPEARE AND HAWARDS CROSS Directed by Derek Jarman. Producers: Louise Parker, Michaela Gluzman. Screenplay: Allen Metcalfe. Cinematography: Tony Fenton. Art Direction: Sue Van Saun. Costumes: Hyacinthe Rigaud. Editing: Michael Abbott. John Campbell. Production designer: Daniel Innes. Costume designer: Beatrix Arden. Music: Julian Copley. Composer: Bill Read. Cast: Paul Phoenix (Marlowe/Holmes); Karen Peres/Scott Peacock (Anne/Bertha); William Niven (Sir Philip); Rodney Harvey (George); Clifton Cross (Chaucer); Michael Parker (Duke); Jason Isaacs/Daniel Fox (Bald); Tim Rice (Peter). Australian distributor: Newmarket. Screen: 108 mins. \$25. 1992.

HOMOGENIUS MHD Directed by James Ivory. Producers: Ismail Merchant. Executive producer: Paul Godfrey. Screenplay: Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Director of photography: Tony Palmer. Robert Palmer. Production designer: Lynette Azinger. Costume designer: Jenny Press. John Bright. Editor: Andrew Menzies. Composer: Richard Slobin. Cast: Vanessa Redgrave (Patti/Maggie); Anthony Hopkins (Henry Wilcox); Helen Mirren (Cora/Helen/Sophie); Emma Thompson (Margaret/Ruthie); Penelope Keith (Brenda/Jane); Judi Dench (Maggie); Helen Mirren (Cora); Ruth Eastgate (Daisy); Sam West (Clementine); James Wilby (Charles Wilkes); James Frayn (Eric Wilkes); Susie Lintern (Dolly Wilkes); Karen O'Brien (Judy Bell); Merchant Ivory Film Corporation with Film Four International. Australian distributor: Hoyts. Screen: 140 mins. \$12. 1993.

EDWARD VIII (Directed by Derek Jarman. Producers: Sean Scanlon, Hall, Antony Root. Executive producer: Sean Royle. Screen: Garry Sweeney. Supporting: Derek Jarman, Stephen McHattie, Ken Deller. Based on the play by Christopher Marlowe. Director of photography: Jim Fenton. Production designer: Christopher Herne. Editor: Steven Morris. Composer: Steven Price. Under: Cliff Stanes. Sound: Peter Jackson. Artwork: Nigel Terry (Marlowe). Hair: Sophie Lintern. Costume: Joanne Flynn (Bertie). John Lynch (Browns); Butler (Peter) (Winget); Christopher Jeffery (Prince Edward); Anna Carter (Bertie). Running time: 120 mins. UK. 1991.

F

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Achillesitic thriller director Barry Levinson
Gordon, A Village Roadshow
Production. It was
Warner Bros./Show
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systems, but even
decade.

To the owners, the production is an
unprecedented Captain John Wimber
give me a gift that can't be beat:



PRODUCER
JOHN FLOCK

Screenplay by
Michael Cappello

Fort



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Fortress

Your producing partner on this project, John Davis, has a multiple picture deal with Threemills Creative Pictures. What's Davis' background and how did you two team up?

John's father is Marvin Davis, who used to own Fox. John used to be an executive there.

After his father sold the studio, John stayed around had a production deal there. He produced a couple of films with Joel Silver, *Predator* (John McTiernan, 1987) and *Predator 2* (Stephen Hopkins, 1990), and also with Larry Gordon. He also did a few films on his own.

John and I met about four years ago when I was working with a company called Film Accord. We put together a project starring Gena Rowlands called *Shameless* (William Peterson, 1990). It was originally going to be distributed by Fox, but ended up being with PolyGram.

It then brought John a project called *Anybody* (Mark Frost, 1992), which we did together with distribution through Fox, and he brought me *Forrest* — something that he had worked on there.

In a media release for *Forrest* you say, "I had a long relationship with Village Roadshow and I thought that *Forrest* would be a perfect vehicle for them and their move to Australia." What had you done in Australia prior to *Forrest*?

I helped finance a mini-series called *A Dangerous Life* (Bob Markowitz, 1988). It was done with HBO in the U.S. and with McElroy & McElroy, the production company, in Australia. That involved first becoming familiar with how the movie business worked down there.

Village and I also worked together on the financing of *Turk* (Stephen Waller, 1988), which is where I got into business with the Village Roadshow group.

So you've been in and out of Australia for some years now?

I spent quite a bit of time in Australia about four years ago, but I hadn't been here in two years. I've been working with Village Roadshow out of its Los Angeles office.

Who did you do the deal with at Village Roadshow?

I'd worked very closely with Greg Coates, who is president of Village Roadshow Pictures, which is the production subsidiary for the Village Roadshow group of companies. I've been working out of Greg's office in Los Angeles for the last year and a half on a variety of projects, with them and without them.

When Julian ran me *Forrest*, we realized it was a very contained production. It didn't require a lot of exterior locations. It was something that we designed to be shot at a movie studio. I knew about the Miramax facility through Greg and thought it would



1. The film was produced in the U.S. by Australian David Rose and was originally based on a novel by Jack Cafferty called *Anytown*. John Davis and John Frank were executive producers.



THE LEFT: ACTRESS NAOMI WATTS, CENTRAL: WARREN'S
ACTOR CHRISTOPHER LAMBERT DURING THE PRODUCTION OF *FORREST GUMP*. BOTTOM: A STYLIZED, COLORFUL IMAGE FROM THE SCARFACE-INSPIRED POSTER FOR *FORREST GUMP*.

just be perfect. You've seen the cell block; it's a massive set. Stage Five was big enough to do it.

As well, Australia has the kind of technicians that you really don't have outside the U.S. They have done a magnificent job. We knew that they could create the *Forrest* set because Warner's had the physical plant to do it and Australia had the people capable of executing the plans.

How would you compare studios full-blown in the U.S. with what you found here in Australia?

I haven't worked in any Australian studio other than this one. But my understanding is that the facilities in Sydney and Melbourne are older and not really designed for motion picture. They're sort houses that have been converted to motion picture use.

This one was built by *Warner Bros.* as a movie studio. The location may not have been ideal at the time, but there's got to be a reason for building it up front. And it's starting to come true for Village and Warner's, which now own it. It's been properly designed! They've even got a tank here that they can utilize.

Stage Five is not a huge warehouse, but a round stage that's properly rigged. It has all the equipment, either in there or immediately available. It is a world-class facility.

Forrest will be sold worldwide by IWC Film Sales. Who is IWC?

IWC is a sales agent named Guy Collins. Guy handled *Mighty Ducks* (Russell Mulcahy, 1992) and *Phantom of the Fleeting* (Mulcahy, 1991), with Christopher Lambert. Guy seems to be the Christopher Lambert expert in the international marketplace.

Guy works in our mentioned facilities. Christopher is the lead. John and I are producing it. Sean Conlon will direct it. Village will be the production entity. We'll do it at the Warner studio. The budget is approximately \$14 million, Australian. Here's the beautiful poster that we've created for the movie. What do you think we can get for it?

Guy then went to Curran, as he'd done this for me on other pictures. He came back and said what he thought we were going to get for it, and we closed the deal. He delivered the contract, and I went over and booked it.

So the strategy was first to choose a major movie star, like Christopher Lambert, who had influence and exposure outside of the U.S., in Europe and throughout the world?

Absolutely. This is an independent film production. Fox was American distributor, but they're not financing the production of the film. And when you're an independent producer, by and large, unless you're extremely well capitalized, and there are fewer and fewer of those, you finan-



2. The actor's name is Christopher Lambert, though English-language versions of the film usually opt for the name "Lamb."



above: *Armageddon*, with Bruce Campbell (left) and Steve Buscemi (right) in a scene from the movie.

films by pre-selling them. And in order to pre-sell them in the current marketplace you have to have someone who is a "star". And there's a very shallow group of stars. It may run relatively deep in terms of male stars who'll enable you to finance your picture. Some of them are obvious names, some lesser, but there are not a lot of them. Christopher [Lambert] happens to fall into that category.

Apart from Christopher Lambert, the film also stars Robert Downey Jr., whose credits include *RoboCop*, *Rainbow Brite* and *Dead Poets Society*.

We cast Christopher first, because in these sorts of pictures your lead actor is what enables you to raise the financing. With Christopher and Stuart Gordon set, we then went out and started looking to fill the secondary roles, like Karen Blackstock, who's played by Loren Locklin. We were also looking for an archetype villain and Kirk plays these roles a lot. He's a terrific character. I don't know if you've seen him in other projects, but he is a very good bad guy. It was as if he was designed for this role.

How did director Stuart Gordon come to your attention?

Stuart had had an interesting reputation in the business since *Re-Animator* (1985), which received enormous critical acclaim for a film that was made on an absolute shoestring budget.

Stuart's been making cult horror films for RKO Pictures for a couple of years, all of which have been extremely clever given virtually no money was available to make them. Stuart did a very good job of making them work within the marketplace that they were created for.

A lot of people in the industry think that Stuart has the potential to break into mainstream action-adventure, which is

how he got involved with Disney on *Mars*. I thought The Kids' Picture developed the film, but unfortunately had some medical problems that wouldn't allow him to go to Mexico to direct it. So Joe Johnston took over.

Stuart's really needed a project that was close to his roots. In terms of budget and the marketing of action adventure with sci-fi, for me will enable Stuart to sort of branch out from what he has done previously.

Apparently there have been three writers on the *Hansel & Gretel*, *Tropic Thunder* and *Terry Gilliam* Fox.

Troy and Steve, who are writing team, were the original writers. We then brought in Terry, who is an experienced television writer. He worked on *Midnight Express* and co-written with Stuart for years. He came in to do a dialogue polish because he was a little bit more experienced and we were on a very extreme time crunch. Terry's a guy who's used to working under television deadlines, rather than feature-type deadlines. Everyone ended up working pretty well together.

So how will the credits read on the finished product?

That is up to the Screen Writers Guild. My guess is that it will read, "Written by Troy Neughton and Steve Peacock and Terry Curtis Fox."

In terms of major Australian crew, your director of photography is David Egby, who did *Mad Max*, *George Miller*, 1979 and *Quigley* (Klaus Wennicke, 1991), and your production designer is David Copley. How did you select them in particular?

This is where Village Roadshow's expertise in Australia really came into play for us. Compared to the film industry in the U.S., Australia is relatively small, and everybody knows everybody else. John and I as producers are not really familiar with everybody who works here, but Village is – Greg Coote, in particular, and Michael Lake, who runs the studio facility here. It wasn't even a matter of interviewing people. We just said, "Who are the best people?" They made their references available and we were thrilled to death with the people they presented to us.

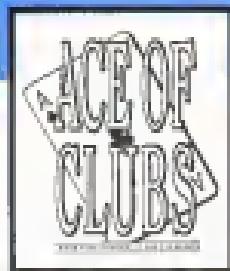
You have non-Australian actors as stars of your movies. How did you negotiate that with Action Equity?

First, a little bit of background. The Australian industry is by and large subsidised by the government, either directly through the Film Finance Corporation and various local organizations like the Queensland Film Development Office, or indirectly through tax offsets like 108A, or Section 31(1). A consequence of this government subsidy is that Action Equity has had an useful lot to say about whom you could or could not bring into the country. There was a direct relationship between Action Equity and Australian immigration, and I feel this was really a consequence of the fact that the people of Australia, either directly or indirectly, were supporting the film industry, and there was a feeling that the

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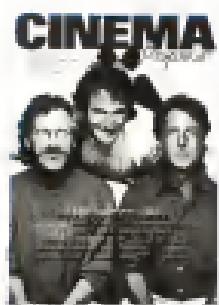
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"By and large, the savings here are in the range of twenty to thirty per cent below the line. Now they're offset a bit by electing to fly in a principal cast and an American director, and by not hiring locals.

But filming here still means significant savings."

JOHN FLOCK

money should be going to Australians and not to Americans who want to shoot here.

We financed this film totally outside of the existing (industry) structure. This is an independently-financed picture with not a dime of government money in it.

Village Roadshow is a major distributor in this country and they're part of the action. They put up a significant amount of money; they own the Australian rights and are full partners with John Davis and I on the picture. But in areas of anything other than the pre-buying of Australian rights, which is the same as we did in Italy, France, Germany, Japan and everywhere else, *Forsaken* is not subsidised at all.

Mike Lohan then tried to Equity for us and said, "We are producing this film here. We would like to have it certified as an Australian production, so we'll only bring in the three American actors because of a much cheaper fee to us to work as an Equity-certified film." Equity came back to us and said, "No, you have an American producer and three non-Australian actors, so we're going to treat you as an offshore company." That means that all of the Equity people we hired on the picture would be treated as if they were SAG [American Screen Actors Guild] members instead of having Equity rates apply. SAG rates would, which are significantly higher.

So, I said, "Well, okay, that's fine. But if that's the case we're not going to agree that this is an Australian production, and I can bring in as many Americans as I want, isn't that correct?" And Equity said, "Yes it is." So we then brought in seven American actors, at which point Equity said, "We had no idea that you were going to bring in that many actors. We're going to take a second look at this." They then really gave us a hard time.

Historically, Equity has had a relationship with immigration, which is not codified any longer. In the past, Equity had a procedure by which they could recommend whether or not an non-Australian actor can be admitted to this country under a visa to work on a film. And my understanding is that these procedures no

longer exist, and hasn't for nearly a year. But the people in Immigration are acting as if they still apply. Equity contacted Immigration and said, "We haven't agreed yet to allow all these Americans into the country, don't issue them their visas." There was quite an argument between me and Equity, because they didn't have a right to do that. They are very difficult to deal with.

So what did you do? Did you hire lawyers and go to the Immigration Department to talk it out?

I didn't get quite to that point, though we threatened to.

There's a government agency in Canberra called DASSETT, which I think is the Department of Arts, Sports, Environment, Tourism and Treasury. I called Canberra and spoke with a representative of DASSETT who told me that there was absolutely the way things should operate, that they would support us if we got to the point where we had to take legal action.

But the fact of the matter was that a week before we were beginning the shoot, I had to get these people on a plane and we ended up going to Equity and saying, "What do you want?" We had to capitulate.

That has been the only unpleasantness really in shooting the film here, and only because Equity seems to have a stranglehold on the industry.

Do you think that Equity "stranglehold" is a reason why few American and off-shore independent motion picture companies come to Australia to use our facilities, technicians, locations and actors? Do they already know they're going to face problems with Equity?

You've asked a couple of different questions. The initial question is, Why don't more American films come to Australia? Yes, I think Equity's one of the contributing factors. Another factor is that the bulk of independent films don't have a sufficient budget to warrant bringing people to Australia to work. As well, the major studios don't want to work here because they have their own facilities.

Okay, so there is a group of independent films that are less modestly budgeted, and *Forsaken* would fall into that category, which can choose Australia as a location. But Equity just makes it more difficult. I wouldn't say they're a deciding factor, but they are certainly a very strong factor.

So, *Forsaken* was a more or less low-budget film, it wasn't because of any changes in policy by either Equity or the Immigration Department?

No, and I'm not sufficiently experienced to reply on what Equity will do on other films. But my understanding of what happened on our film is that, because it is not a government-subsidised film, in any sense, we are technically able to bring in anybody we want. But as a consequence of bringing in a significant number of American actors, Equity has changed, as significantly more money than we could have cost us had we not



Fortress

brought in the American actors. I had about thirty Equity members working on the film at a far greater cost than it would have been had I not brought in all those American actors.

I also have a complete new set of residuals rules that apply to those people working on the film, unusually different than what normally applies on an Equity-controlled picture.

Analyst, you have said elsewhere that the film would have cost thirty per cent more if it had been made in the U.S. rather than Australia?

That's correct. I'm describing this problem to you with Equity's costs relative to a \$14 million film. We're not talking about really significant amounts of money. My problems with Equity are a central part of doing business. It's an incremental cost.

By and large the savings here are in the range of twenty to thirty percent below the line. Now they're offset slightly by shooting to fly in a principal cast and an American director, and by not having locals but filming here still means significant savings.

Based on this experience, would you recommend to other independent production companies in the U.S. to come to Australia?

Absolutely. The problems were insignificant in comparison to the benefits. It's just unfortunate that those problems even exist. They're a waste of time, a waste of money. But, on the balance, I'd

come back here any time.

What future place do you have?

John and I have a picture called *The Great Gatsby*, which we're doing in Mexico this year and in which Christopher is also going to star. Then Christopher and I have a project together that we will probably end up doing at Village Roadshow called *Well Driven*, which I could see us doing here later this year.

So your experience with the technology, facilities and actors here has been very satisfactory with the exception of one problem?

The short answer is yes, and I don't even want to overstate the problem with Actors' Equity. It's more of an annoyance than a problem. It shouldn't deter anybody from coming here. It's just a situation that should be dealt with internally, as it's just not necessary.

There is a perception in the U.S. that Equity is a huge problem and it shouldn't be. The problem really arises because American producers want to come here and get low costs and then Equity says, "Great, you can only bring in our stars." Then there's a series of "Well, Equity won't let us do this." But of course there are strings attached when you are dealing with government money. It's just unfortunate that it spills over into a project that has no government assistance at all.

ACTORS' EQUITY REPLIES

Anne Sillito of Actors' Equity was invited to comment on various comments made by John Plock. Here is her response:

John Plock has made a number of various allegations about Actors' Equity, which in the interests of fairness, should not go unanswered. We thank Cinema Project for the opportunity to make this response.

For over a decade Equity has distinguished between foreign and Australian producers for the purposes of applying our imported artiste policy. Put simply, we have always taken and will continue to be much tougher on productions subsidised by the public purse. We believe that this is a role should not represent an "open door" to foreign artists. We are quite happy to welcome our overseas colleagues but in responsible numbers. This is not simply rhetoric – since mid-1988, 65 foreign artists have worked in government-subsidised film and television productions.

Our foreign producers take an entirely different attitude. While understandably we are keen to maximise employment opportunities for Australian performers, we recognise that foreign casting is a must for so-called off-shore productions. Providing a response to reasonable, no-nonsense objections. Our strategy in this area is a matter of public record in *Fairfax*. In a plot, we responded to the importation of an artiste, cost, we proposed seven performers for *Panther* and six for *Masters*, impossible.

Plock alleges that Equity gave *Panther* a "hard time" over his request to bring in seven U.S. performers. We fail to disagree. In August 1988, we were advised that *Panther* required three U.S. performers. On 26 September we were advised that this number had increased to five. Later, that number increased to seven.

On 3 October we requested information from the production company on the reason for this incremental increase. In particular, we questioned the rationale for importing two performers who would only be appearing in the opening scenes. This information was provided to us on 10 October and the application was closed the next day.

Mr Plock fails to point out that applications on behalf of Meany-Lambert and Sonnenberg were received on 1 October and cleared the next day. He also fails to point out that the two remaining artists were cleared by Equity within two days of receiving formal documentation.

Mr Plock should also recognise that both the Department of Immigration (DILGDA) and Equity cleared his application within a

very short time frame. The ten-working-day rule that DILGDA normally requires was waived. We believe that no staged protests with Equity had more to do with elements of our costing, rather than any residual or real pain.

Mr Plock seems to think that Equity has a "stranglehold" over DILGDA. The not inconsiderable number of foreign artists that have worked in Australia despite our objection suggests otherwise. Plock is no doubt aware that the Screen Actors Guild also has similar and indeed much stronger control over what Australians describe as "importation of talent".

As to Plock's alleged threat to hire lawyers, the *Cinema Project* interview is the first we've heard of it.

Mr Plock's complaint in relation to Equity is not confined to imported artists. He also implies that Equity's requirement that SAG rates and residuals should apply at "subsidiary" film companies is of course, absolutely understandable. Mr Plock is in the business of minimising budgets. We are in the business of ensuring that Australian performers receive fair wages and conditions. We do not consider Australian minimum (currently \$404 per week) "fair" for off-shore features. The Australian rating currently may be positioned to exceed the lowest rates in the English speaking world (but New Zealand) for domestic production, which have historically been unable to secure the lucrative distribution deals available to U.S. films. We are not prepared to extend that stability in the U.S. production community.

Mr Plock is quite entitled to disagree with Equity's policy on appropriate rates. However, he is not entitled to imply that this was serving in him or the last minute. Equity's position has been clearly advertised to the Australian and international production community. We consider that foreign producers are entitled to know of our policy in advance. It is for this reason that we publish a brochure that clearly outlines our policy. This has been distributed to all major US production companies. Mr Plock's representation of our mailing of August 1988 was clearly erroneous that we require the SAG contract to be used in U.S. jurisdictions.

I must say that it is a pity that Plock must perceive a stranglehold with a producer who incidentally we have never had the opportunity to correspond with. Let alone meet. Fortunately, our relationship with the overwhelming majority of producers who have worked in Australia have been excellent. But that's not an exemption to the occasional gripe.



The Trichinosis of 1891, Tom Roberts (1856-1930).
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Noel King

"NOT TO BE AN INTELLECTUAL": ADRIAN MARTIN ON TEEN MOVIES

"Cinematheque film criticism is not I suppose to analyse the campervan option [...]. What is essential for the *Intelligencer* is an analysis of *reality*. And he doesn't do either this does preoccupation on the campervan." JULIA BARTHOLOMEW

In a recent review article on popular culture, Steven Pithi characterized the popular dilemma of the popular culture critic in the following way:

One finds very easily intellectualizing the popular (a close reading of "The County Show" or "Bleeding Blue" or "Hairspray") or moves away from it as if it were something?

Pithi went on to conclude that the domain of popular culture criticism, constituting a significant problematic, must necessarily resemble a territory land where:

The literature one chose presented unto it by (mostly) inexplicable mass culture represents bringing theory home, leaving no space for intellectual wondering what it would be not its datum of definition. (p. 208)

Martin's article,
however interestingly
the dubious and
suspicious **are**
presented as
problematic **as**
ever **elements** **of**
culture. It is already
that in this particular
moment what goes
unseen in this representation
of the dynamics,
the energies, the
instability further than
comes into being these
problematic, more
problematic.

Pithi's characterization gets to the heart of a lot of current writing on popular culture, especially that writing which displays an (almost) self-reflexive anxiety (concerning the possibility of producing adequate critical discourses on popular culture(s)) and his remarks correspond interestingly with a (posthumous) paper published in *Cinema Papers* a couple of years ago, Adrian Martin's article on "The Teen Movie".¹

In this article, Martin used the teen pic as an occasion to launch a broadside against the current state of film criticism and film reviewing. He claimed that the teen movie poses a "problem" for film writing at all levels (p. 10); particularly a film critique deriving from 1970s film theory (p. 10) and for a film journalist considering "real" (as opposed to full-time film reviewers) (p. 10), "rather weary adult generic" at contemporary cinema, with their often vacuously middle-ground liberal logic" (p. 10). So far as Martin was concerned, some of these critics were "high moralists and intellectuals" (p. 11), as bad and insipid as a location it had to have inserted commas placed around it. This bunch of Clark Kent's and old-timers was incapable of dealing with "the qualities strengthen[ing]" an "adolescent intensity" (p. 10) of young film pics. Perhaps unsurprisingly in an article on such a topic, these figures were cast as the avatars of Edie Powney (Jeffrey Jones) *Chair of Students* in *Fascinating Day Off* that is to say in many media versions of an authority come personate the figure of Power and Authority who makes the powers and energies of the Young and whose destiny it is to be discounted, muted and unassumingly called.

Against this figure comes the figure of Martin, wanting to "overcome a lot of resistances, and audit a few scores" (p. 11)—with nimbly subtended or/other forms of critical discourse. Now if this is your relation then your own critical discourse will not be quite different from those you are attacking. To some extent, Martin's is quite different but in other ways it is quite similar. On the one hand, Martin writes that "why teens become teens" – and it is always interesting to be around that. And although (Andrew Britton notes I have no idea of Martin's approved critical models) I have seen a lot of the critical models he doesn't like), implicit in his overall argument seems to be the notion that some form of film criticism (and in the tradition, largely doffing or a little less) should to capture the energies and volatilities of popular film. Such a view is at line with the hope that film criticism somehow could am-



Adrian Martin

NON-CAS

Though Noel King sometimes slips between discussing one article and my general practice as a writer, he mostly sticks to addressing the specific *critical* style and argumentative strategies of "The Team Movie: Why Bother?" I need to thank him for doing this, as it is the response to do much the same. Since I do not take King's contribution as a personal attack but a reasonably respectful critique, I want to use this occasion not merely to defend some of my original positions, but also to seriously evaluate my own practice, three years on.

I do not have the space to respond to all of King's points, so I will concentrate on three areas: "the popular", "performance" writing and role division.

"The popular" (specifically current critical approaches to the popular) is the central topic at long last a reversal. One of his concerns in this area is the prevalent view of a critical writing style which would popular culture's travelling companion, hopefully putting off a "minimal capture of some affective, evocative dimension of the popular film". King sees a rough, preliminary stab at a genealogy of this kind of writing: literary studies, Bob Dylan (J. Robert Werner, *Fascinating*).

I do not have much argument with King's brief (but solid) sketch of the "performer-like" mode of writing (although, admittedly, the inclusion of a section of my most characterised, hyperactive writing is one of the appealingly provocative analytical exercises performed on writing styles by Guygen Wittenberg in his 1988 doctoral *Authenticity and Criticism*). I would certainly apply an intense personal preoccupation to this style of criticism, although I earlier than believing this to be the only/onlyable style. Its prevalence is indeed complex, starting perhaps with Pather (and his influences), branching into the rock criticism of Lester Bangs and John Maus, developing various ways through the work of Jonathan Rosenbaum, The Village Voice contributions (J. Hoberman, Chris Rodley, Amy Taubin), Richard Jensen, David Thomson and post-Fabulation (but Rancine, Michael, Greg Ford and Rob Thompson with Raymond Durgnet in *Basis* since the 1990s) pressing a quite different but importantly overlapping path.

What I take issue with in King's account of this style is the *welding* of it to an exclusive commitment to popular film. After all, Pather's greatest gift to the history of criticism (just as it passed through Aronoff as well as high-class journals and film magazines) was the exemplary application of his "funny style" to avant-garde cinema (please, *Wittgen*!). French New Wave (Rouquier) and the emerging experimental/narrative generation of the 70s (Duras, Allemann, Fassbinder), at the same time as he kept writing (often obviously rather than in popular publications) about Hollywood film. This is a critical strategy continued by virtually all the writers cited above, and I am happy to be with them.

The obsession of writers to align the œuvres with "the popular" is a relatively recent step of development — one of the marks of the 1980s, in fact. The Edinburgh Festival booklets in Roger Corman and Bernhard Huber in the late 80s/early 90s (for example, make no self-aggrandizing populist claims, while the classic 1990s anthology Kings of the 80s drew the standard criticism (valued by Rosenbaum among others) that it was simply not productive to persistently play off a brand of "popular" œuvres (in this case exploitation movies) against either "stuffy" art-films or the "weirdy" avant-garde.

The anti-aesthetic/popular moment in film criticism — the critique that so-called popular film is the only authentically worth devoting attention to — is born and born by new writers who entered the field in

I have no wish to take any "strange or eccentric, esoteric and reclusive", nor do I wish to limit anyone's film-taste ... to expressionism or "non-narrative aestheticism" without further in-depth analysis ... I think King is reading too much of the potential critical audience as certain anti-aesthetic attitudes and a particular style of writing



Noel King

body, it is performative since the essential elements of the film it is discussing (its contexts) it exists in the very workings and textures of its own prose; effect a kind of *metacritique* or some affirmative *evaluative dimension* of the popular film could render with a suitably over-prized immediacy, the essentiality of the film on, at the very least, some cognitively-supplementary detail from it. Only in this way would criticism be able to convey truly the popular aspect of the text in question. A genealogy for such a criticism, could be anything from the innumerate mass journalism (e.g. in Australia, Bob Ellis' *Review Review* reviews) through to Manny Farber's "Terminal Criticism" and even (as name a personal favourite) Peabody's wonderfully joyous, jumpy descriptions of some of Douglas Sirk's films.

Martin's prose includes terms such as "tutty", "flapped-out", "way-out", "heavily", "slaggy", "tremly", "toker", "telepath", "weak", "possession", "fakumming"—a lexicon which works in producing numerous alternative critical perspectives. As Christopher Morley has observed, Martin's critics do

In the reiteration of certain names and values or in the repetition over-drawn certain pall-mallows, tortured syntactic structures, rhythmic patterns, ostentatious obscurities etc., produce an effect of identity which is sometimes taken to be that of an aesthetic Value.¹

Martin clearly has just such an identity and he mobilises it very effectively in defence of a "mess" of films, some of which he finds "really" unloved" (p. 10). Perhaps it is the phrase like this last one that you actually get a sense of what it is that Martin wants. He clearly values people who write "affectionately or inventively" (pp. 10-11) about cinema, refuse to clobber it that is either so-called "stale" (our critics) or that is performed as "an exercise in superiority: the power is there when it is curiously good and others when it is unconfidently bad" (p. 10). For in this latter mode of criticism

What is thereby lost [—] is the enjoyment of cinema — more and especially popular cinema — as a place where risks can be taken, where original minds (sometimes individually) happen, and where thrilling unexpected encounters between viewer and film should (and do) occur (p. 11)

This is a description of film viewing as crating and perhaps even deriving from some of Robert Bresson's writings on the pleasure(s) of the text and a (poetic) lover's discourse.

Martin is annoyed that the "intensity and achievement" (p. 11) of the best movie art is being overlooked. The best movie art is ignored completely or is "theoretically dumbed down as the esthetic vision of contemporary commercialist cinema, since 1980s mass culture 'generosity'" (p. 11). Alternatively, blockbuster films (e.g. *American Edge*) sometimes are separated off from the pack and restated as "not your average teen movie" (p. 11). Martin is unhappy with such moves to isolate "the precious" from "the norm".

If it is enough, for instance, to want to seek out (Masses, for itself) style, the ensuing "master-

pieces" of the genre, the well-received reviews, or the ones that display acknowledging reverence for traditional Hollywood format (p. 11).

For Martin, it is not a matter of discovering masterpieces or sources, isolating "subversive or avant-garde exemplars" because

such critical gestures, at some level (and) tend to end up emphasising what might be the supposedly good from the supposedly bad; the precious from the normal and the prestigious United them there (like mass audience) (p. 12).

Burton in his critics after being an impressively steady stream of bad reviews, Martin writes, "Not all these films are masterpiece yet my memory, but all of them are interesting and exciting in myriad ways" (p. 10).

So, to some extent, Martin works with a category *Untouchable*, the star that's always prime for the "iron evaluative critique" (p. 10) claimed to describe the main movie. That simply goes to show how he is in-between critical discourses as he calls around for the appropriate forms in which to discuss the best pic. What Martin seems to put in place of the existing evaluative, cultural pic is the "uniqueness thesis" of objects (branded teen movies) (p. 10). He refers with a conception of popular culture as "sand on the beach" (p. 10) or, in his most vivid description, a cushion shorn.

Instead of film (and) becoming griping, griping of reachiness, instantly creating each other in a peckish (p. 10).

In seeking for a non-evaluative description of the larger popular cultural system of which the teen movie is a part, and in seeking an account of "the very delicate interplay of expression and invention" (p. 10) found in the teen pic, Martin's critical orientation seems aligned with such other projects as the Russian Formalists' descriptions of a literary system, Bordwell/Thompson/ Staiger's account of classical Hollywood cinema, some of the writing of either Muriel and Hans Robert Jeans, Tony Bennett's notion of a "teasing, tantalising" and refined, and James Woodroffe's discussion of the cinema (film) performance. There are models for an analysis of the teen movie as a teletext culture and (and) it is interesting that most of them are conducted outside the domain of cinema studies. (But I am sceptical of the extent to which such an analysis could ever be made without judgements or discourses of either of that kind or another. It seems clear that, to some extent, Martin's work accepts a normative aesthetic discourse — but can he? In his patriotic film quotes (which I am particularly) a negative version of just such a process of writing, that, though challenging:

Open up, all those nappers who shroud when I guess that obnoxiousness film Planning on directly 1-1 all in film review (p. 10).

Of course, Burton's film can be called a teen movie (he has also "Fire and Fury" to pull in the big chil generation of James Taylor fans) but after that initial (overbearing) move, discussion might quite reasonably and usefully centre on the way the film distinguishes 1980s American

political issues (Westward, etc.) and to what extent the film could be moved into a subset of teen movies that explicitly focus moral questions of politics and class (*Body of Your Light of Day*, *Pretty in Pink*, *The Last Tycoon*, *Blameless*). This would not be say that these films are "better" (i.e. to *Indecent Blush*) but would simply be to notice important differences of emphasis within the "adolescent novel" to recognise some integrated identifications within their plotting system. And I think even Martin, with his usual populistic stances, might have been moved by the accidentally-historical adolescent issues involved that mother (Christine Lohr) removes her father in order to make arrangements for the future of her son (*River Phoenix*), a future to be lived away from her. Given the John Ford of the *McLean's Tower* long-past scene in *The Grapes of Wrath* would have been pulling it up to the schematic programme question of this particular scene.

What I am trying to insist, at least is that Martin's critical reviewing embodies its dreams and contains its proposals for the terms in which to analyse the teen pic, will always in every other domain of values, thus specify that this particular domain what gets selected the expression of the dynamics, the energies, the violence rather than something less pulsated more subtle. The cinema, after all, while a place of the startling unexplainable encounters, a place of unguarded moments, is also a place of air-conditioning pop-corn and Mass Box. Martin's article plays with an opposition of a purely descriptive kind of writing (the possibility of a mutual mapping of the synonymous mass of film) and a writing which would concern instead, breathless enthusiasm. But the crucial bureaucrat who is testing the fading and inert capacity, finally, Martin's popular culture critics. Martin's discussion of teen movies, after all, is a very sophisticated critical function, and does (though he could never call it that), one arrived by a range of education, reading and research. Which is to say that Martin's own distinctive "critical gaze" (especially here as in "intransigence"), from then the "mass audience", is in a hurry to imagine it could be otherwise. After all, what social group is going to argue about whether or not the film has got (or losing) place in different star? As in the case with a number of popular cultural entities, Martin's writing suggests that the very fact of discussing a popular culturalised in a way that is not "high theory" somehow diminishes the didactic-discovering critical that object in a true way, perhaps even contrasting with its consumers (if they also need *Clothes Please*).

In this sense Martin's text is removed in some far removed from Ian Chambers on popular culture. In the Introduction to *The Popular Culture*, Chambers refers to an "adult culture" (presented) in art galleries, museums and university courses, a culture which demands "cultivated tastes and a formally acquired knowledge". This culture "seemingly consists of activities that are separated from the ran of daily life." Popular Culture, on the contrary,

residence the tactile, the corporeal, the travel-like experience, the shared. It does not offer an abstract aesthetic; instead it involves privileged objects of attention that involve mobile forms of leisure, taste and desire (p. 12).

Popular culture is not too "contaminated" but rather it is to be approached by way of Walter Benjamin's notion of "uninterrupted receptivity" (p. 12). Rather than cast it as "contaminating waste" which adopts "the authority of the academic mind that seeks to regulate an experience that is freely presented" (p. 13), Chambers opt for "an informal knowledge of the everyday, based on the memory of the immediate, the pleasurable, the concrete" (p. 13).

Maugham-Morris has indicated the choice tested, though severe critical treatments and smothering self-critique, matching to projects that conceive all the alternatives in this way. Insofar as these critics make some sort of appeal to a category called "the people", it is always in appeal to "a voice, or a figure of a voice, used in a discourse of critique". By thus invoking "the people", the popular cultural critic turns "the popular" into "the basically delegitimated, alienated and/or excluded critics' own activity" (p. 26). Morris describes a procedure whereby

What seems given as first in citing of popular voices [...] is not act of narration that conveys any rhythm played harmoniously between the knowing subjectified subjectivities and collective subject "the people" (pp. 23-24).

The outcome of this strategy is that "the people" who both is source of authority for a book and is figure of its evaluative activity" (p. 26) as a result of which "the popular" enterprise is not only "singularified [...] [immaterial] in structure" (p. 23).

Affecting both to Ian Chambers' writing and to the currency of the Sturt Hall-derived sense of "cultural doyens" in contemporary cultural studies, Morris aptly observes:

The problem that Ian will associate with pop-theory writing is probably, assessment of the popular as essentially discursive, assessing the surface and what an attention upon surfaces is reflected at the level of aesthetic practice of the theory of cultural doyens. (p. 26)

Morris' causally demanding conclusion is that cultural doyens are being increasingly performed (and resisted) in a discourse that fails to connect to, than the argument in fact cannot move on (p. 26).

It can be argued that Martin is totally involved in this sort of move, only that he is quite close to it. His attempt to construct an expanded notion of the teen movie via "an understanding of young culture in all its complexity and implausibility" (p. 13) is clearly well connected with the uses of popular music (of the carefully packaged soundtracks of the early John Hughes films), contemporary American fiction (notably S. E. Hinton but also the currently controversial Brett Easton Ellis) and the work of P. Scott Fitzgerald and J. D. Salinger contained in the figure of Jay McInerney, whose pre-eminent status at the time of Manhattan's happenings were his writing introductions to coffee-table books on New York and to a recording of *Das Passen* (Marshall Thranter), television sitcoms such as *Fame* (which provided the basic model with some of its personae and perhaps even encouraged its tendency toward banality and monotony). And certainly one of the charges against the teen movie that Martin's proposed book should all stress will be that they seem meant to be about not kids having trouble with their parents. (And while I agree with Martin's desire to "desublimate the anonymous system" without undermining it, another point will be "keeping" reverence for traditional Hollywood forms" (p. 13) (surely the negativity with which says John Hughes items (e.g., *Rebel Without a Cause*) in Christopher McElderry's *From Clapton to Hairspray* (describing a special fondness for *A Star Is Born*)). Let me tell us something about this very happens in presenting his stance: the cinematic calculation in which he's involved.

Finally, it is simply not clear to me how Martin's own position as a film critic accepts these "finds" deriving fundamentally from C. L. Lewis" (p. 13) that by this re-reading of other critics and their criticisms, if the basis of other critics demonstrated that they were "willing to find interesting enough to spend time analysing" (p. 16), and the consequence of this was that "the displaced sense of anonymous film review" vanishes, safely cocooned off" (p. 13); this was only the case until Martin, in his role as popular cultural crit, was willing to find that them interesting enough to spend a day on analysing. And this analysis necessarily displays his ability to turn the supposedly low-profile products of popular culture into a sort of "esthetic occasion" in which the display of the critics' responses and "sense" is paramount.

To that extent, Martin's article, whatever its lesson and tone, remains an instance of "Marxist textualizing" the popular". And it is the case that has already caused some readers to say, "I wouldn't have been able to put it like that (get that much out of it, see that much in it), etc., so then such a momentous all-encompassing value lies in the uneven and distorted distribution of the critical skills exhibited in Martin's writing. Consequently, Martin would do better to practice a version of Kristeva's "ethics of modesty" and acknowledge the constitutive presence of the terms of critical discourse he activates, rather than trying to play a popular genre in which the critic's cluster of particular discourses is thought to reside in favour of the luminous, pulsating presence of the popular object itself.

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7. The name of Hedy was calculated to avoid those forms of paternalistic critique of popular culture which tended in figure "the people" as primarily vulnerable in the sense of a "Marxist ideology" as well as need of the cultural ones' protection. The enthusiasm taking up Hedy's name was reflected in some earlier reviews advancing "the people" as everywhere "unconscious", "passive" and "negative", unceasingly imposing their own meanings on a range of societal social roles. Again it is Maugham-Morris who notes in the more rigorous analysis of such vision: "the people" have no necessarily defining characteristics except an automatic capacity to negotiate readings, generate new interpretations and rewrite the materials of culture. This is in view of course, the function of cultural studies itself [...]. We argue that the generic focus of the dominant critics, "the people" in fact represents the most passive energies and functions of critical reading." (Resolving in Cultural Studies, op. cit. p. 12).

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Adrian Martin

the 80s, and their mentors/teachers who have been eager to discover the radical or avant-garde enthusiasm of the pre-postmodern period. Doubtless, there has been some collusion between this violently popular attitude and the jazzy, performative critical approaches used by King – although it's more likely to be encouraged in the pages of *The Post-Biblical Film Committee* or *Cinema Papers*.

Looking back, I conclude that the effort to make my own movie with overwhelming persuasiveness to the average *Cinema Papers* reader (as I considered him/her in my mind) led to a degree of reflex populism – a loss of argument that goes something like “The [new] movie is popular, it’s loved by the masses, so why won’t you [= repressed middle-class viewer] love it, too?” I accept completely Brighton Morris’ request (grinned by King) of all the contested culture puritans/professors/academics/poachers contained in that plausibly populist report. As it happened, I had diagnosed most of these professed insights in an article written two years earlier (“No Flowers for the Cinéphiles” in *Post-Poss* anthology, issued in the 80s).

In that 1987 piece, I say what I now exactly believe, that writing “populist” as a critic has little or nothing to do with reaching the people, as that need is inherently imagined by traditionalists, while it has everything to do (and that is what a positive about it) with reaching out and travelling down new lines of social exchange, and finding new connections and networks that can cross previous socio-cultural divisions. Writing about popular culture, then, isn’t doomed to be merely propagative or popular. It’s more like the “mutant” form of critical agency for a changing cultural terrain.

Is it even correct to call the teen movie an instance of “popular film” or “popular culture”? The genre releases more novelty for me now than in 1989 (interesting questions about the frequency use of such terms in a broad, loose way). It is probably all right to refer to the teen movie as a “popular genre” (i.e., one that many people consume with the glee thought in that sense that they are cool to watch “the teen movie” basically refers teens’ sense of their generation, probably not from others). But the paradox of this calling it “superior” – particularly in the home video age – is that many of the specific films within that genre may not be popular (certainly some and distinctly recognizable) at all. (This seems a given for horror, action, comedy and many typical video-store genres.) I am curious that more people and media have seen and appreciated *UnChain My Heart* and *Jeannine*, *Chainsaw Park*, *Dr. Alien* and *Who Killed Peter Langford?* (Or, more, only two remarkably strange and interesting recent teen movies released on video.)

Thus, in marking terms, the teen movie today (in the aftermath of its mid-80s box-office boom)

functions rather as it did in its purely Q movie, exploitation days. Shaped on mass, like video stores (as, in the 80s, they passed through the drive-in), teen movies are, in this sense, more anonymous and indistinct than ever (which is not to say they are off the record). However, here, then, some commentators and here have lately been toying with the notion of “teenform” (as in *Teenform*) but, rather, a resigned or subservient one. James Hay in *Cultural Studies* (October 1990) suggests that the teen movie is discussed as “minor” because in the series (or Willes, Deleuze and Félix Guattari designate minor instantane – subversiveness) surprising Bill Reiter from the gurus of official culture “had not entirely shaped social culture’s preferred policy.” More recently, Brett Garton in *Peter Watson* (Feb-March 1990) considers a subversive political message in the obscure teen-horror movie *Zombie High* and sees it locally emblematic: “The revolution will begin in the video stores of the world!!!”

As to King’s charge that my deepest popular desire is “to get it to be an intellectual”, I could protest to a certain bemusement, since one of the determined reactions to my work from American types is that I “basically over intellectualise” (more particularly “over theorise”) and intended as simple entertainment. In fact, in writing for *Cinema Papers*, I made the point to strive for the very random, while hopefully not losing the average reader entirely. A certain interplay of intellectualism and “lucky” accessibility is the basis of my politics as a crit.

I can imagine many clearer and smarter ways not to be an intellectual than writing “The Teen Movie: Why Bother?” in the way that I did – consciously devoting one half of the piece to a discussion of existing critical methodologies, complete with quotations from Derrida, Baudrillard, West, Bayly and Pöhl. I have no wish to hide my “range of education, reading and research”. Nor do I wish to limit anyone’s literary (read: off my chest) expression of “senselessness on thematic” without further in-depth analysis. Once again, I think King is making too much of the potential conflict between a certain anti-intellectual attitude and a particular style of writing and viewing so he unwittingly limits the possible options for critical practice. Using a term like “flipped out” (as every paragraph does) makes one an instant anti-intellectual. (Would King consider the same intention in *Pedobear*, *Dengue* and *Dead Marquise*?), nor does it immediately denote a “populist” genre in which analysis, persuasion and political effect are being entirely erased.

King concedes (implicitly) that my article was a “provocation”, a “position” but he is sure I would “never pull it” in “very sophisticated critical-theoretical contexts”. Not so. King and I are I suspect equally conscious of the role of rhetoric in all sorts of writing, the difference between us in our respective critical perspectives is that I actively

use rhetoric in journalistic or semi-journalistic situations. And that’s that. It never occurs to King possibly whether it is so. Rhetorical persuasion – particularly pitched to a large and diverse audience – often courts overstatement. Heavy simplification and self-punctumational sometimes it has to.

I finish at what I perceive as a certain programmatic parenthesis added to King’s remarks (as in the repeat edition criticism by his colleague Stephen Macrae in *Cinema* 11, June 1981), and the aforementioned *Authorship and Criticism*. King notes that the various internalised contradictions and contradictions of my position – ultimately – it would be happen that the world of critique would be better off if I had not committed them. In a memorable move, he suggests “responsible criticism” as a positive type of criticism we judges superior to the one I presented in 1980 (and probably still do). I’m not proposing that King’s desire for my responsible, theoretical or partially-correct discourses (these pieces in review of these things) but I do wonder if he preferred critical practice to just a little more effortless and clear, without the right call-and-political answers or safety guarantees. I can fully appreciate straight critical writing (I read and use a lot of it) but I’ll also always go out of my way to stick up for criticism which is seriously moving, difficult, contradictory and multi-textured.

In the final chapter, Booth of my 1989 article, nicely “Why bother? in the teen movie?” poses the question: “What more reason do you need?” Today, I would be happy to change that second last sentence to simply: “Because it exists.” King attempts to argue that the teen movie would hardly merit its original unless it “finds itself in toto existence” or at least turns it into an “ideologically consistent” only now worthy of serious critical attention. But I repeat, the test relies evenly, meaning that it exists independently of any case I make about it, or of my proclaimed taste for it.

At the moment of my initial encounter with it, and forever thereafter, the teen movie has remained “other” to me something I didn’t hardly desire, or fear, witness to, knowing at the outset. I can never completely experience or capture all its fugitive energies, tones and effects (in individual films and in the genre at large). In this light, the teen movie is for me more than a “prior” choice in the sense described above – not something I “choose” or “will”, but something which perpetually surprises me, something I must constantly discover. Does I suggest that this is my own “ethic ofmodity” associated? And that the Nazi King’s position that finds a necessary contradiction between this approach to cinema and a commitment to “post-formalist” explanatory writing?

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**BLOODLUST; CITY OF JOY; EUROPA (ZENTROPA);
HARLEY DAVIDSON AND THE MARLBORO MAN;
OVERTHE HILL FRIES WITHER; AND, BLACK HARVEST**

BLOODLUST

CARL QUINN

In order to save time the *Bloodlust* website who apparently seeks no endorsements or otherwise from a reviewer, let me state unequivocally that I am glad I did not pay money to see *Bloodlust*. While I am not particularly a fan of exploitation movies, and while I find it hard to avoid bringing a certain set of assumptions about political correctness/knowingness to bear on a subject which is predictably exploitative, I have been known on occasion to suspend whatever critical faculties I may possess and simply revel in the trash and gore, but with *Bloodlust* this was repelled me.

The production notes for *Bloodlust* provide the following synopsis, which tells us respectively insensibility (or indifference) of quality, and even some of narrative, serves well as a starting point for a discussion of the film's concerns. "*Bloodlust* is a stylish and macabre action thriller with a strong cast of leads: Harrison Ford, three made-in-their-own-pain who uproot the mob and find themselves pursued into a living hell."

The vampires Lise (Jane Birkin the face), Frisco (Billy Chapman) and Ted (Robert James O'Hallor) three ostensibly funky, groovy, irreverently monstrous of evil, who unfortunately seem to act as three of the most boring vacuous characters imaginable. Sex, drugs and rock and roll have rarely seemed so uninteresting a way of spending an evening as it does in the hands of this trio. Aungsiphi biography courtesy of Hoboomba's The Lounge, ending in an orgy of sex and violence (which I, it seems, do in a violent atmosphere). It is realized with as much gusto as either the bad bad boy playing Monopoly and drinking raspberry cordial.

Literally with "the rest" a rising group headed by Greg (Paul Moir), who seems to divide their time between supervising a position playing poker and chasing vampires,decorate Mervyn (this ain't *Requiem*) it is Greg who undoubtedly has the best voice in the film, when he comes across the dead remains of a jaded steamer attendant and brings himself to a spot of sodomy for his birthday.

Precious as that scenario may sound, it represents one of the few moments when *Bloodlust* shows any desire to step wholeheartedly into the realm of the grottoes, the offensives, the shocking. My everlasting impression after watching this film was that it would really have loved to be seen. And that, can be writer-director-producer Richard Healeyston and Jon Haworth didn't have the good sense to realize that, with neither a great mind nor a huge budget, the only directors to take note of that of parody.



Of course, I could be misreading the film. Healeyston is a parody, and a very successful one at that. After all, there were many of the essential elements of the shock/exploitation film thrown so carelessly here that it is doubtful that parody must have been the tone aimed for. The adoption of, and frequent allusion from, American exports would also seem to suggest parody, perhaps of the tendency of the more predictably exploitative Australian films of the 1980s period to brainlessly "Americanise" (i.e., pretend to Americaneness), usually to the complete detriment of any indigenous quality — or just quality per se. Perhaps then, *Bloodlust* deservedly produced the light-

ness appealing, postures kindly directed, copied and added this is not so much an attempt at exploitation cinema as a critique of it.

Michael Caine will try anything to escape a film they like more than the jaws of consumption. But the notorious icon like *Bloodlust* must compromise it — at least comically — in critique of anything (even the last). But the vampires' victims are primarily yuppie or religious novices. Instances not so much as desire to put those values systems up for critique, as a realization that the video rental audience far upsets their values largely of working-class males who feel themselves towards these groups and values. But if the

Mixed test results such as reading film production history does not.

At this point, I should confess to a slight at word. Blockbuster is not strictly speaking, a term – it is a title. Shot on 35 mm film, the fact that the film has received a theatrical release in Melbourne is of little length and ostensibly conveys no conventional notion of screenwriter structure suffuses the simple issue of designation in a way which is, I believe, quite central to the project of making Blockbuster. In a discussion I had with Hewitt, I was clear that he sees the film – in retrospect – and I am well aware of the potential here for a reading of motives – as serving the function of an 'in your-face' message to the established institutional order of the Australian film industry, particularly in its refusal to conform to the spirit of the funding game.

Hewitt and McLean broke many rules in the making of *Blockbuster* in addition to their decision not to seek public sector funding. They did not pay the majority of the people involved anything unless a profit deal which would see all involved sharing in return in the distributed version that the film turns a profit. Anybody who wanted to be in the film would do so long as they could afford to. This of course meant that the film had to be made inexpensively, for fear of attracting the attention of the various quals, which could necessarily have bumped the budget well over the \$750 000 for which the film was made. Not until the film was in the can (as far as I am concerned) did the rest of us much officially begin to suspect.

All that said, there is much to approve of in such a programme of guerrilla filmmaking, as precisely one year in mind the latter training ground that Roger Corman's New World, a die-hard amateur/craftsman approach to filmmaking, has proven to be in the U.S. One is tempted to support Hewitt's call for a "flexible filmmaking practice based on open-ended principles" as opposed to the static dependency which tends to limit Australian film production both terms of style and quantity. Yet if that approach is dependent upon an understanding of wages and conditions hard won by the industry guilds and unions, then one must have severe reservations. One must also consider just who is being employed when Hewitt states that "only certain key personnel were paid", and that the film's main purpose is to serve as a "calling-card" for his fellow director/producers.

I don't wish to read the intentions of the filmmakers. It may really did about to challenge the greed and insensitivity of the production industry some of the 1980s period. Then top talent for doing so, but the conclusion is that more than the audience would be exploited. If this became the norm for independent filmmaking in this country we had to despair.

Ultimately though, for people not working in the industry, the only question of any relevance

will be: "Is it any good?" Hewitt would answer that he and McLean never intended *Blockbuster* to be art, or even just meant to be "laughed-out-loud films". I would suggest it is appropriate. Steve Martin quote from the cover of *Cinema Pather's* book *Postcards From the Edge* that Blockbuster neither art nor cult, it is pure greasy dumb fun.

BLOCKBUSTER Directed by Richard Hewitt. Producers: Richard McLean/Hewitt. Jim Hayes. Screenplay: Richard McLean/Hewitt. Jim Hayes. Cinematographer: Robert Ruggi. Music: Kevin Chapman. Original score: Richard McLean/Hewitt. Production designer: Michael Parry. Costume designer: Anna Lavel. Editors: Raymund/Watkinson. Jon Hewitt. Com positor: Ross Hoddinott. Cast: Jane Sibert (Hewitt); Sally Dignan (Hewitt); Robert James (Hewitt); Paul Monks (Brother Bert); Paul Moden; Jason Young; Max Grembecky; Ian Peter; John-Peter McLean. Producers: Australian Film Commission/Warner Productions. (SP) Between 17 May 1988.

CITY OF JOY

1984, 100 mins, O/C

First, *The Killing Fields*, then *The Mission*, now *City of Joy*. Richard Attenborough's audiences another sympathetic portrayal of an agonisingly unfamiliar culture, raising consciousness about him and struggle in the Third World. While less successful in his sense of the *Mission* Project, *Persepolis* and *Little Boy*?

John makes smoothly called, testful film criticism which illustrates his rough edges and some spontaneity, but which usually assume that those who wouldn't bother with film in universities or screening styles will go to his

Reports of local hostility were published during the shooting of the film in Calcutta. It was feared that this film would be another example of cinema imperialism and paternalizing interpretation, with the weaknesses, especially the Americans coming into Calcutta, photographing suffering in India and passing it around the world's airwaves. Commendably will offer an analysis John

has successfully overcame these criticisms. I would argue that he has.

The adaptation of Dominique Lapierre's novel by Merle Mellett contributes to the respectful handling of imperialism. McLean/Hewitt's *Children of a Lesser God* and war roles make hearing-impaired characters come across instead of pedestallising them. His screenplay here reflects a balanced interest writing the film for the comfortable English speaking audience to appreciate and be moved by, and respecting Indian movement about the presumptions of American cultural imperialism and cultural buying habits. Now the whites are safe to play in Calcutta, but the are of taking over is really over.

I have not read the novel but understand that in the film a Texas doctor has been substituted as hero for a Polish priest. This is the kind of change that does not anger but to loyal readers. But taking the film as "based on" the novel is where the change works well. The confrontation between Asian perspectives and those of the U.S. would not be possible with a Polish hero.

The theme is, resilience, not dependent on audience response pro and con the work of the Catholic Church clerics in India. Let alone that of Mother Teresa. And there is no mention of God – whether the celibate will fail in love and ...

And what kind of credible priest would enter? Patrick Bergin here made? Presented as a doctor like his performance is quite assured, sometimes robust, but far more sympathetic than he usually is. Pauline Collins will also delight her *Stargate* audiences following as Jean, a chipper and chubby earth mother who chooses to live and work with the city slum people.

The Indian cast is most impressive, believable, dignified, emotionally compelling. This is true of Om Puri as Hesul, the turner-turned-robber turned and Shabana Azmi as his wife. The children are natural and the story of the

1. Brown is Australia on *The Mission* (1986)





Indian family in morally disengaged Australia or poor equals a vision with integrity and love?

Where City of Joy is particularly worth reflecting on is in its signalling of trends in, especially recent American films.

The moral (and theocentric) bankruptcy of the Reagan era and choppy highsides he embeds in them (being lapped from the heights of sweat, blood and public love) it has succeeded in itself made possible and millions of unemployed Americans the intense stage of desperation or reflect it, the 1980s have begun with major characters fleeing their lives, searching for meaning and value. Even Marlon Brando's character in *Apocalypse Now*, Jeff Bridges in *The King King*, William Hurt in *The Doctor*, Kelly Lynch in *Colditz* etc.

Now it is Patrick Swayze in *Grease*. Max doesn't like his life as a father-dominated but gayly flippant refusal and insulation have provided no human contact. Revel-gazing is not ultimately redemptive. But human contact, human suffering and empathy with victims of social oppression can give meaning to empty or sheltered lives. To this extent City of Joy is little

A surprisingly explicit solution in the same way to Li Q's yuppie self-preoccupation was offered by *Moody Blues* in Alice Ayres (Mrs Pearce) and her husband (William Hurt) attend a lecture at their child school on Mother Teresa and her work. At the end of the film, Alice goes to Calcutta (personified) and the experience of working with Mother Teresa changes her life completely. She develops greater compassion and becomes satisfied with the consciousness of life.

City of Joy like Bruce Beresford's *Black Robe* (which so many commentators have linked to John's *The Mission*), is a little disengagement of the end of all kinds of colonisation. The Americans with their 'manifest destiny' of world leadership cannot sustain it. In fact they need the wisdom of India, the human simplicities (as opposed to complexities) and the opportunity to

share the experience of being victim. This was what happened to the Jews in *The Mission* (this was the meaning of Father Lacombe's spiritual and spiritual journey in *Diez de Mayo*).

There has been a heritage of dangerous optical and theological arguments that needs to learn from the experience of people in their own cultures. In fact, the appropriate buzz word in recent Catholic theology especially in the Latin American, Philippine and African experience is "reconciliation". *Reconciliation* City of Joy is going way from the usual American mode. It is definitely melodrama, sentimental, polished and smooth. But it is also relevant popular melodrama.

ONCE UPON A TIME directed by Robert John Prentiss, Alan Parker, Roland Just, Co-producer Ian Smith, Storyline: Alan Parker, Based on Christopher Logue's book 'Ghosts of photography', Peter Ross Production designer: Ray Wester, Costume designer: Judy Miniver, Editor: Barry Hartung, Director: Gino Monticchio, Cin: Francis Bryony, Mus: Louis Prima, Colors: (John Badham), Art: Mark Lutkus, Art Direction: Peter P. Gorn, Casting: Sandra Phillips, Music director: Alan Parsons, Prog: Herbie Hancock, Original Lightmixer: Peter M. Morris, Australian Distributor: Hoyts (1984) 104 mins. Screenplay: Bruce

EUROPEA

[Australian title: *Zentropa*]

EUROPEA FILM FOUNDRY

Germany, 1945. The Americans are in the process of 'de-Nazifying' and 'democratising' Germany. 'Wiesenthal' (not - nor of the species) (a mysterious status, but of the species) Nazi collaborator, whom caught, was 'neutralised' to which they must reveal any

Many cities are in ruins after the war. Figures who had been powerful are now forced to collaborate with the Allies if they wish to maintain such a position in German society. They fall in 'quasi-moralised' to which they must reveal any

with such new terms: sexual, marital, domestic or journalistic. Some rules apply to the older, more conservative (but not necessarily less) members; some members are more dynamic, some members are more passive and the members know

local connections. Control of a company such as Zentropa (a transport firm, required a 'black record' but some exceptions are later admitted.

The Americans, such as Cole (John Goodman) (the Cobbles) are not without moral blunders. Indeed, the Cobble makes certain arrangements for his German friends in return for favours.

There is a Krasner (John Goodman) (an American with German parents who returns to Germany to work and help in the task of reconstruction. He is offered a job as a telephone-conductor on a train. Through him we are taken

a journey through a post-apocalyptic landscape of shattered structures, images and violence.

What is perhaps most striking about this film is the style. Lars Von Trier uses a number of techniques — colour and black and white film superimposition and back projection — to create an intricate pattern of similarities and contrasts. Now the use of black and white as well as colour in this entire film is not new. In *Shadows of Potemkin* (Borisov-Potemkin, 1925) and parts of *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) (especially used colour to emphasise the ideological tendencies of the ensemble and to communicate or psychologise states). In *André Rieu's* (1988) *Tetralogy* employed colour in order to convey the full force of spiritual awakening, divine growth and revelation. In *Hans-Joachim Hult's* employed colour to emphasise distinguishable heighten violent levels of revealing, articulation and modes of being and in *Days of Ashes* (Natalie Barbu) colour was used as well as back projection and superimposition along with different lenses — for example wide-angle in the foreground and telephoto in the background — to communicate the structural and thematic importance of ambiguity, ambivalence and illusion.

Europea (Zentropa) reveals these same button. Von Trier has gone a step further. All three, the image consists of three or four (or more) planes and colour is used not just to highlight but also to suggest states of enmity or passion, anxiety, contrast, time shifts, and to act as a structural motif of permeation. Such strategies establish a fundamental system of differentiation within the image, sometimes a network of tensions which mirror the goals that separate those characters — the threshold where art not be united on the level of relationships, desires, love. Indeed, Von Trier's vision is not really an optimistic one, notwithstanding the hypothetical nature of the film (no pun intended).

Another striking strategy is the use of an anti-climax, third-person narrative hypostasis. This

"Inhabitor", who is not seen but only heard, guides Kraszna into Europa (as mentioned as the last German city he visited), and seems to have control over the life of the phantom. At least, the phantom seems to have some knowledge – an interesting point since it raises the whole question of whether Kraszna does have – or, rather what he is faced with – a number of alternatives though whether he is freely able to choose between these is another matter altogether. He also recommends humility and modesty, that there is nothing to see outside the brain. The doctor recommends caution as there are many "womankind" on the beach, and Kraszna is instructed to report any "lightning".

Max Hartmann (Jürgen Heimsoeth), the tormented master of Zentropa, often borrows adage like "Do what you have to do" or "Komm zu mir" (Barbara Sukowa). His daughter, with whom Kressler falls in love, feels that he ought to support either the "revolution" or the Antisemites and that his decision ought to be reflected in action. The play recommends a suspension of judgement and a tolerance of both levels since "Many are confused today" (just as only) that the narrator's voice is characterized by certainty and authority. He seems to be infallible. In this way Von Trier influences the sense that Kressler is constantly subject to external forces which have only half-comprehension. If at all. The narrative becomes Kressler's guide, master and fate as well as an incisive analysis of Kressler as a condition. The effect is not only unsettling, but prebystyle affective.

The train itself is much more than the usual one; the log train that belongs to Max suggests the importance of the company in Marinette. The journey is clearly symbolic ("transport is needed") and the job of sleeping car conductor has "mythological" associations. Indeed, the Indians and the whites, when age it, determine the extent of what Krasil' sees of this world. Some of the passengers represent motifs which Krasil' never knew himself. The journey, like though it represents a type of enlightenment, is analogous to Krasil's life in terms of periods (just as he is a fool and lacks foresight). Moreover, there is no possibility of getting off and Krasil' has no idea of where the journey will end (as I am afraid). The narrative though seems to know just as little as the train that Krasil' learns of the web of commitment, not and banished in which he becomes involved.

In other respects the film at least is satisfactory. Katherina, for example, has some skilled and trenchant dialogue, though only on a handful of occasions. One white antinomian marriage in the film, the "green wolf," simply eliminates the burden of messings that it is intended to bear. The rather simpleminded chivalry that is shown to honor the creature of night and the creature of day is really not representative at all of the figure of the woman. What is required, of course, is the righting of the full story. Indeed, the type of chivalry that is shown in the film seems wholly, to say the

Most serious, the title does not attempt to provide any sense of balance or measure in one of the central arguments, much in spite of the damaging effects of the American presence in Germany, which seems far enough, given what the *essentials* effects of "de-Hitlerization" and "demilitarization"? Not much of that is addressed at all. The result, again, is that there is an absence of well-being in the reasoning which, ironically, leads off to a weakening of the argument. An element of distinction becomes impossible.

However, the film does have a great deal to offer the viewer. Max Von Sydow's narration is one of the major strengths of the film, potentially interesting and utterly engrossing. It is brilliantly delivered and executed. The use of the camera, as stated earlier, is quite innovative and the photography (supervised by Hans-Joachim von Leyden) who employed Carl Zeiss Jena lenses (and definitely is masterful, as ever). There are convincing performances by an accomplished cast, and even Tintin has a small – and significant – role as the Jive who fails to save Miss Hartmann's career. But this is a film that is full of significant details and the journey itself like the art of the painter, is not only reveratory but quite sophisticated.

EUROPA (CENTRUMPA) directed by Luis Van Treeck
Producers Peter Adriaenssen Janneke Eisingh
Cameraman Gertjan Oosterhof Philippe Goss
Sound Supervisor Leo Van Tiel Marc Vrielinck
Editor-in-chief of photography Henning Bartsch
Editorial assistant Jean-Paul Maurice Production designer
Henning Bartsch Costume designer Magda Rasmussen
Editor Haraldsvorwerk Compositing Jochen Lippert Casting
Jan-Marc Bleijwijk Designers Koenraad Berghout Sabine
Photographer (interior) Bob van Lierop (exterior) Henk
Eikel Hoogendoorn (exterior) Bob van Lierop (exterior)
Sound Recordist (interior) Henk Hoorn (exterior) Henk
Jeroen Fennema (exterior) Eddie Constenla (exterior)
Hans Lelstra (exterior) Marc Van Dijk (exterior)
Production office (interior) Mirella Pinto (exterior) Gertjan
Oosterhof Film (exterior) Gertjan Oosterhof Production
Australian distributor Double Feature (Aust)
www.europanet.com

HARLEY DAVIDSON AND THE MARSHAL LAW

— 1 —

WHEN A costly, star-studded film slips through the Hollywood distribution net without so much as a promotional whisper, one is entitled to approach its theatrical release with suspicion. *Heavy Devotion* and the *Akbarbo Men* is a film that warrants such suspicion and, ultimately, more than a little disappointment.

Directed by Australian Burton Wilson, this cult piece of escapist begins and ends like a high-spirited jeans commercial and moves right at the seams in between. For a while, it shapes up less than its predecessor. Harley Davidson (Victor French) has emerged from the nest with a woman. Billed with another white in the process of terminating an unmet head-up, she joined in a two-room brawl involving his old bridge, the Marlboro Man (Don Johnson). The ramble is a fine variation of the tone to follow. It also marks a reversion between the two characters after a several years of drifting their own ways.

Winter stretches the canvas of his film quickly and efficiently, as he does with most of his pictures; and sets the mood for Pennsylvania steel Montero Man and Harley Davidson are cool, colourless urban thrillers somewhere. The trouble is they end up going nowhere. In a shoddily constructed film that has been just slightly too neatly too neatly and with too much reliance on stilted performances. It propagates after courses uninterestingly and, aside from a few genuinely interesting scenes, fails to extend the necessary comic drama to punctuate its Red landscapes. Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Men drift along, rating itself in the shadows of other road films like Easy Rider (Dennis Hopper, 1969) and the Winter classic Bad Country and one Gangster (Kirk Douglas/Pat Hill, 1968).

The Balch and Gaudence myth is drawn upon



a root-top jeep into Las Vegas where he goes, even a play on that interior "Who are these guys?" like Winter's film, however, looks the greatest. Phoenix of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid has a dark edge that is generated by lack of forethought as much as by design. The film is steered by Gov. Michael Paul's fan-fetched banal script which suggests him several comedy's a quarter of the way through to a hasty action piece the fenders too hot to ride that seriously.

The film is set in the year 1908, when displaced heroes are quite evidently in the wrong place at the wrong time, which is a point that could have been easily made had it been set in the present day, or the title for instance, at fact that the fabulously exciting amounts to having no consequence to the look and feel of the storylines whatsoever. One suggests the 1908 perspective was a play by the producers to show off a bit of how gallant and heroic, and dignified the film's hero Western formula in a form acceptable to today's audiences.

Like Butch (Paul Newman) and Sundance (Robert Redford), Harley and Marlene bring the old-fashioned cowboy way, riding around in pairs of jeans that seem like them and getting themselves into deep water. In the case, trouble starts when they decide to help an old friend whose bar is about to be foreclosed by a bunch of crooked creditors. Harley comes up with a scheme to re-lend the bar, with the assistance of Marlene and some others from the bar. They pull the loan off right but, instead of the \$8 million required to save the bar, they end up with a cache of a dangerous new recreational drug called crystal dust. Unfortunately this unlikely hero makes a regular appearance in moments of battle, smacking windows, logical plot-twists and coming one-on-one as the heroes try to evade a posse of Indians which has materialized from the pages of a Western novel.

Lucky's puffy-faced, smirking/Daniel Baldwin-like (get Harley and Marlene) pose, smugly and smirking bullet-proof leather jackets that can only have been conjured by Winter's knowledges of the Real Kelly legend. They are moisture-given to move down their visors, and hang on the commentaries at a silly looking and not representing as a banker (Dan Aykroyd) repeated).

From there on, only two things can save the film: Rogers and Johnson. On the surface, the weathered stars look good together and hence themselves well during the stunt and action sequences. Both however, have trouble to harness the tension or energy to break away from the one-dimensional constraints of their sculpted characters. They fight each other aimlessly as well related to the uncharitable expectation that one wonders whether they do it just have one another. A few quiet moments during the film are meant to be buddy-movie, but those scenes don't click, even though some gentle interstellar compositions by Basil Poledouris (The Hunt for Red October). Clapton would try to convince us that something meaningful is happening.

As the film's action fades, its two stars only reflect further lost their audience because we

don't know who they are. One must give director Winter credit for respecting the template to categorize his movie as an out-there, whose approach and motivation lesser in about fifty and, it is true, Harley and Marlene emerge as hapless and ridiculous but they are more familiar or noble to us. Their vulnerability might make them seem more human (and thus deserving of varied sympathy) but it does not make these persons any more relatable. Neither experiences any real conflict of personality/character, suffice to say that Harley overcomes his timidity to use a handgun and Marlene finally works up the gumption to tell her girlfriend that she needs her.

Harley and Marlene, in fact, are nothing much more than confused adults with skewed ideals. At one stage Harley philosophizes, "If there is a heaven and a God I'd like to meet the Devil." Yet the men we thought may have been on a Cisco Brothers-style path to redemption soon resorts to an iron column, busting windows, but riding motorcycle and roaring away like Marlene. His partner plots along, visiting his deceased father and doing stupid things like shooting his old motorcycle (mechanical horse) and shooting his revolver both with gutter tongue.

If the film is to be acknowledged for any redeeming feature, they belong to specific meiosis rather than enduring qualities. One can't help in few clever eight pages and the occasional purpose, mostly involving Johnson, who seems more of a road with series difficulty than the country Purcell. Visually, the film has tried hard to capture the processes of the West, letting its horses in wild-and-free urban neighborhoods, highways and deserts.

The soundtrack is a mixture of incident compositions by Basil Poledouris and songs by performers like Eric Clapton and Van Morrison. The latter performing a few numbers by way of a cupboard carried as a car stage. A few of the inclusions catchy, but ultimately the music does nothing to give this film an edge of its own.

Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man goes down as a film of missed opportunity on all fronts. It is marked by regrettable abilities from the

opening disclaimer that, because of the title, the production has no association with any products or companies to an ending that, to all intents, is a bizarre commercial. What could have been a dazzling and entertaining anomaly in today's movie climate is ultimately nothing more than a forgettable whose two misdirected heroes certainly beg the question "Who are these guys?"

HARLEY DAVIDSON AND THE MARLBORO MAN
Directed by Steven Soderbergh. Screenplay: Jim Mancuso. Cinematography: Don McPhee. Producers: Michael Alperin, Christopher DeMille. Music: Paul O'Connor. Director of photography: Peter Bailey. Production designer: Paul Peters. Costumes designer: Richard Tissot. Editor: Orly Katz. Composer: Basil Poledouris. Cast: Mickey Rourke (Harley Davidson), Dennis Hopper (Marlene), Shannen Doherty (Arlene), Greg Kinnear (Johnson), Tom Savini (Erico), Dennis Hopper (Marlon), Eric Clapton (Clapton), Van Morrison (Morrison), Tom Waits (Waits), Rick Moranis (Thom), Tim Guinee (pilot), Béatrice Dalle (Dalle), Dennis Lehane (Lehane). Production: Australian distributor: 20th Century Fox Film Corp., US: Miramax.

OVER THE HILL

BY TIMOTHY HODGES

OVER THE HILL, literally too old, even better days, on the decline or downward bound. But not much hope of ascending again; however that's what happens when the mind is static, like lady's confaginations, weaken and add, also, like that time when, according to Marquez, a person wears one's capriole to another several hundred miles within memory, suggesting that, concerning something about the way things were and having to put up with relatives who only seem to hate or care, until the moment of death when everyone becomes silent.

Over the Hill, then, is another what seems to be a series of affirmations which are intended to reinforce the notion that aging necessarily presupposes the decline of ones passions, desire for adventure and need for genuine company. And if the snapshot of the Marquez —

older couple, perhaps missing, more than anything else, some deeper source of joy, hope,



mostly older citizens — all the reviews are very good. George Stevens: this is a success.

Alema (Olympia Dukakis) is moved by her son into a place with "everything she needs." Apparently, this is where "her son" wanted and Alema will not have "bother" to pay. But what she spends is enormous, all she can save is a solid wife will in front of her. A little lie there pushed into a radio and, suddenly, Alema is in a place like Asymmetria where her daughter, Elizabeth (Sigourney Weaver), lives with her husband, a politician with a luxury car and a mansion.

Alema believes that Elizabeth will have more time for her and will be more accessible. Also upon arrival, she realizes that her daughter is in a largely disrupted life. Mrs. and Mrs. comes on her doorstep. Elizabeth is one of Asymmetria's few best-dressed women and is possessed of a body deserved to "look good." When Alema is in the front gear of her daughter's home, she is asked about "free time" and completely misunderstands. The suggestion in short of Elizabeth had been generous about the free喘息 she should have entitled about 1/3 of her time to Alema.

Elizabeth, in anguish, is preoccupied with the current appearance, with not wanting any public embarrassment and with not wanting to the cameras. Alema is used by her daughter as an unnecessary burden. So Elizabeth and her husband decide to "get rid of her" — presumably because she is perceived to be "over the top" as a burden. The film then reveals that this logic is a sham (she knows that this politeness stayed to be an indecent). Alema continues Elizabeth and husband discuss the problem and how to get her out of the house. Consequently, Alema says a "100 supercharged Chevy and heads into the bush.

But the film does not only reveal the hypocrisy of the daughter and her assessment by the media, and to the masses of that public image. Alema, too, was once a person of another kind (she oggi had been crushed). In a relationship in ways which are analogous to Elizabeth's assessment (although Elizabeth claims she is "happy").

Alema's struggle for independence suggests that the title of the film should be *rebel* totally, her attempt and fulfillment can only be compared once that scenario of the past has been accepted — revealed and purged. Elizabeth will be the catalyst. Indeed, the film is hardly concerned with such processes of individuation through realization and release, on a number of levels. Alema will assert the disengagement and compunction in Elizabeth's life. Elizabeth will recall her mother's subjection and heritage, so to speak. Elizabeth will also be confronted by her daughter (and no act).

The film does not always have a serious tone. There are a few good jokes, such as the one about the ridiculously high prices charged for gavel at health centers and for patrol in remote areas. There is also a reporter who uses an ingenious method while taking. He throws highlights into the water and then literally collects the dead and unhooked fish on the surface.

Alema meets a number of other characters such as Morris (Bill Nye), the gas-pump owner, Dutch



above: *return journey* stars alema (left), george stevens, as elizabeth (right); below: alema

(Doris Pfeiffer), the saintly retired dentist and middle-class-type who relates to Alema. Doris is the book, the companion and her partner, and a member of both houses whose idea of good time is to have older women (and others) at the wheel on the road.

Alema also meets a number of Asymmetrians who have little to say. But this film leaves us in no doubt that their love of silence and calm, song and flute, has restorative effects on Alema, who, it is significant, reacts with respect and deference. This woman's gratitude and respect for Alema is made clear in one of the most memorable scenes.

There is much to admire in the film, despite its obvious limitations. It has a number of compelling situations which although which has clearly minors the trouble of the past and whose acts reveal a drive towards reconciliation. Elizabeth and Alema (respectively and sympathetically played by Dukakis), as a woman who is seeking her identity in harsh and even conditions. In this respect, Dutch is unpredictable and source of friendship and ultimately love.

The relative role of the Portuguese people given from a mercantile perspective, signs of endurance and strength in a world of compromise and pacification. Admittedly, there are dramatic elements, some of the secondary characters are also history and the resolution is a little predictable, but the central argument is put with some subtlety, depth and sophistication.

OVER THE HILL (Screenplay: George Miller; Producers: Robert Green, Darren Turner; Associate producer: Kristian Burke; Director: George Miller; Cinematographer: Ross McWhirter; Associate-cinematographer: Christopher Robert Russell; Director of photography: David Conrad; Production designer: Graeme Miller; Costume designer: Tracy Ryan; Hair: Henry Dugger; Composer: David Malouf; Cast: Olympia Dukakis (Alema); Robert Duvall (Doris); Bill Nye (Morris); Diane Ladd (Dutch); Diane Sawyer (journalist); Andrea Marc (Lori); Pepe Mendez (Marquez); Martin Jevons (Foster); Alan Young (Navy); Australian distributor: Village Roadshow Pictures; 100 mins; Australia; 1993)

VIDEO

FIRE: WITHIN

CD-ROM • \$19.95

Sould *Fire Within* be a much more reverent about something cinematic studies of his beloved Cuba. He would get concerned about *Fire Within* is a film which purports to examine the effects of Cuban repression regime on ordinary people.

Directed by Australian Gill Armstrong, this悲情 drama skirts around any solid political issues, and presents a pretty story about a Cuban counter-revolutionary who becomes re-united with his wife and daughter after almost spending eight years in prison. The film is also filled as an exotic love story, the revival of dormant passion, even a form of stirring mélodrama. Unfortunately, *Fire Within* fails to deliver any of these by the time as usually short duration has passed into oblivion.

The film marks Armstrong's second U.S. film-making long after the modestly successful *Two Deaths in Vain*. Presumably, the Sydney-based earned enough points thereby to be invited back for another loan at the big Hollywood studio. This time, however, she has been lamped with a lemon of a story that often attempts to disguise as a metaphor in motion.

Within the first five minutes, Armstrong establishes the character of her film: Asymmetrially, Nestor (Jimmy Smits), arrives in Florida to an uncertain future and a wife, Isoldi (Gloria Schoch), who has hardened toward him because of the damage his actions have caused to Maternity Tomcattingness. There is another man on the scene: Sam (Vincent Price). On the nest, and Nestor's own daughter (Berlin Dame) no longer recognises her.

The viewer is forced to stay with Nestor — once a renowned journalist in Cuba — as he broods over his obviously troubled and fragile life as he rounds the Little Havana district where he is regarded as a hero by his compatriots. But hard way through the film the protagonist is still trying

ing nothing significant has happened to him, ends from an encounter with the policeman, and a few overtures by exiled Cuban dissidents to renew the struggle that landed him in prison.

The film's biggest liability is a script by Cynthia Glore which leaves too many holes unfilled and depresses its three main characters of breeding space. Although it is clear there is some sort of triangular conflict between the Nestor, Nestor and Goro, the three players hardly interact. Too much is assumed rather than said, and there's little engaging drama and alienation over stories hinted and supposed to drive up the tension but too many of them never bear a pinching edge. It is difficult to understand, for instance, why Nestor and his wife should be so averse to each other after he has been imprisoned for so long. Pachetti never seems to learn his lesson; Nestor's apparent reticence to leave it put with the wife is presented as "obstinate" (Gloria) when the two men happen to cross paths.

Nestor's performance as the lugubrious Nestor is credible, although the viewer tires of waiting for him to shift out of the sullen, somberizing persona he presents to us all. Gómez does a nice job of parting on a Cuban accent and seems well in control of his work which is understandable given that he still is hamstrung by fear. His character does not give us full access to those who are supposed to be the love interests of his life, and Gómez himself seems to have been denied the opportunity to do much more than peep, frown and roll in the sack in a few brief 12-frames. He is well cast as the man in the middle, although he will be better remembered in much smaller roles such as the played marion in *Full Metal Jacket* and the henchman with a fat cat Julie Roberts character in *Swing Fever*.

While the film makes a good show of developing dramatic continuity, it tries to bolster its plot with a liberal dosage of bathos and Latin-bounding music by Maurice Jarre. The angel featherbed does help explain why the main characters behave the way they do, yet ultimately they are contrivances to fill a structure of the story. One fails to mind predators who are threatening when Nestor and Goro have had a moment alone through. The viewer quickly sees the last move when suddenly the film is chopped by a range of Nestor back in prison.

As the film rolls on to its maddening and predictable ending, one is left to wonder whether some vital scenes were left in the cutting room floor, or whether director Armstrong was consciously hamstrung in some way by the budgeting of his production. At least one scene involving a fight at a barbershop fails to make reference to the rest of the narrative, and seems to have been left in the final cut just to give the film an obligatory slice of action.

The fact that the film only ran for 88 minutes and treated out of an extended theatrical release, suggests there were significant production difficulties. Armstrong appears to have tried to keep the story same punch, but her authority over the project is really questionable. The cameras part of the face in the staged crowd, the

absence of narration on the screen has no connection with some aesthetic's basic nature.

One cannot across the stamp face and the face out from the film screen like we all straight out of the "Book of 101 Big Pictures Televisus".

Even when the film attempts to lighten up with some humor, the deadened effect does not come off because the jokes are either banal or out of context. To my recollection, the two main gags of the movie involve readily identifiable symbols of American culture: sperm fishing and video cameras — products one can hardly expect to inspire belly laughs and some shudders from an audience.

Maurice Jarre's instrumental score has a layered Disney Romantique feel which is pleasant enough to listen to, but fails to distract one from the sombre tone of the film. In composing his soundtrack, Jarre seems to have given too much thought to conjuring up an exotic sense of place as opposed to creating a sound feel for underlying emotions of the characters.

The film is very in look at, which is partly attributable to Armstrong's cleanliness behind the camera. Robert Zemeckis' production design and Boucicault's photographic move. The setting certainly conveys what it has to live in the Little Heaven quarter of Milan: the cramped dwellings, the prevalent religious symbols and the street urchins. At the end of the film, however, it is hard to say where actually been there because we don't get to know the characters.

Peter Pachetti makes an effort to express some ideally universal themes: the dispensation of people from their homeland, alienation in a far-off land, loyalty to an ideological cause and family disengagement. To name a few. Utterly necessary, however, of these ideas is quite hard. In comparison to *Cry Freedom*, *Miranda*, *Barbershop*, *Rebel Without a Cause* and *African Queen* which are more convincing portrayals of displaced individuals who have been denied the power and status of their appearance.

The film is otherwise faltered Nestor delivering a falter self-story of life in Cuba: "My soul will remain in prison until Cuba is truly free"; he says before as escorting crowd. In spite of the aniseo, it is hard to buy this attempt of getting Nestor into someone else's skin if it has been obvious who ultimately inspired him more than frustration on the part of the viewer. Perhaps it is the tone of *Black Harvest* are more closely aligned to the dramatic notion of the film without, anyway this had a better shot.

PIRES WITHIN Directed by William Anderson. Producer: Walter Rosta. Laura Dreyfuss. Executive producer: Jim Brown. Scriptwriter: Cynthia Clark. Director of photography: David Gibbons. Production designer: Robert Zemeckis. Supervising editor: Lee Lichtenstein. Editor: John Scott. Composer: Maurice Jarre. Cast: Jimmy Smits (Nestor), Gloria Gómez (Gloria), Vicente Peña (Goro), Luis (Pachetti). A Pacific/Starz/Universal/Marco Sestini/Miramax release of a Miramax Production. 100+ minutes. Warner Home Video. \$19.98. Rating: PG-13. (1993)



COMMENTARY

BLACK HARVEST

MARCUS BRUNI

The opening of *Black Harvest* can be interpreted as either a contrasting absence or a poorly-conceived attempt to promote the two previous films by the filmmaker concerned. Short scenes from *First Contact* and *Joe Lally's Neighborhood* suggest that a reworking of old territory is about to be offered up. In yet another documentary that follows a (predictable) path of consciousness logic.

But just as the film looks like rewarding this tried methodology, Black Harvest moves into its narrative with all the unconvincingness that a hand-held camera can convey. Genuinely logic tries to distinguish an absent mother from great innocence and the pattern of chaos that Robin Andersen and Bob Connolly had suggested in those previous films is finally ruined.

While *First Contact* and *Joe Lally's Neighborhood* stand firm in the way they approach the colonial history of Papua New Guinea to the world at large, they used an acute and approach to the dominantly gentle, low-key and too much noise. *Black Harvest* alive with noise, while its summertime approach to a year—imposed in some manner sitting around Joe Lally's neighborhood—ultimately corrupting. Not surprising, as a result the film abhors a lot with narrative continuities of feature films.

For example, it moves erratically in and out of temporal reality as the story moves from the abstractions of musical education to that well-known epochal-explosion. At 75 minutes, it is also tendentious, and perhaps itself well for the duration.

Unashamedly a follow-up to the previous work of Andersen and Connolly, *Black Harvest* is set five years after the events in *Joe Lally's Neighborhood*.

Joe Letby is the product of an alliance between native women and the first white Australian explorers to the Highlands of central New Guinea. His initial role that of his mixed white mother, even though the mixed marriage is a lifetime with his tribal relatives.

He is undoubtedly a wealthy man, with property in Australia and coffee plantations in Papua. His "journey" as portrayed in this film is to join with the Gunggari tribe in planting a coffee plantation, waiting for it to mature and reaping the financial rewards. But the world market for coffee collapses just as the coffee is ready to be picked. The consequent nose dive is devastating for Joe and the local natives who had built their dreams on a coffee gold mine.

Simultaneously, the Gunggari tribe has with their neighbours, almost of course, cut off communication with Joe. From this point, the wonderful ambiguities come of colliding cultural values and behaviour turn the film into a riveting and tragic document.

In some ways Anderson and Connolly could still have been justified with their good fortune, as the ultimate of their subjects rises into a stirring cockpit model, which is the focus of the pleasure.

Meanwhile, the collapse of race and culture is worthy of Shigeru Mizuki's *Time* on atomic reactions and cultural conflicts growing out of rapid industrialization in post World War II Japan.

While I noted that the eccentric narrative of the previous two films had been removed from this much more active and involved effort, there is no doubt that Black Heaven has its own distinctive appeal. In this case it is a refreshingly more complicated version of postcolonialism.

While such a topic is bound to evoke only a small minority of thoughts whose interests are likely to be the more advanced aesthetic areas of anthropology and political economy (these are indeed the areas of discourse). This is not so in these clearly postcolonial 1990s by the supposedly purer cultures - especially history and mathematics - anthropology and political economy provide a means of assessing how societies develop, used and collapse.

In remarkable ways, Black Heaven indicates that those critical and highly value-laden social satires are capable of providing the viewers with a perspective which may not expand or overarching comprehensiveness of the state of things, but strives to cut the job of inquiry and insight. This brilliant, deeply moving and at times tragic documentary stands as an example of how great documentaries can work to enlighten and challenge the audience.

BLISS: SURVIVAL Directed by Paddy Anderson. With Garry Connolly. Producers Marie Anderson, Garry Connolly. Associate producer Chris O'Leary. Director of photography: Ben Connolly. Editors: Peta Thomas, Bob Connolly. Sound supervisor: Andrew Anderson. Gorham Coughlan. Translations: Maggie Wilson, George Thomas. Tel: Australian Film Commission in association with Broadcasting Corporation La Sept (France), Channel 4 (UK), Instituto de Fomento para las Ciencias y las Artes (Mexico), Film Australia, Silver Pictures Australia - 1990.

FILM FINANCE CORPORATION FUNDING DECISIONS

22 April 1990

EDUCATIONAL

THE BRAVE AND ALBINOQUE: A HISTORY OF RACE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA The Nation Pictures Company. Exe. Producer: Max Lloyd. Producers: Robert Reynolds. Consultant producer: John Murray (SI reader). Greg Greenough. Writers: Robert Reynolds during three-month documentary shoot while it was initially due to air in the Northern Star, told through the lives and voices of Australian newspaper correspondents, doctors, nurses, anthropologists, aid workers, politicians, university students and schoolchildren from across the country and overseas.

60 mins

ENTERTAINMENT

BLACK RIVER (8th release) Lucas Productions. Producers: Robert Lucas, Anwynn Whistler (Screen Writers), Kristin Lucas. Writers: Kristin Whistler (joint-presenter), Julianne Schatz (scripted), Karen Lukan (adaptation). Music: drama to assist self-exploratory open-air River, with music recorded by the Metropolitan Opera Company and the Berliner Ensemble. Black River has been released in minority and is set in a small outback town in Australia about a young Aboriginal boy in foster care in the local gaol. A woman is planned during the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Peoples in 1993. Black River will feature leading Aboriginal singer performers (Monrody Bannister) and will be shot in the studio and an outside in Victoria.

EDUCATIONAL

KARIBIA AND THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD (International Agent) Claudio Pizzorusso and Raphael Pizzorusso (Prod. execs). Andrew Ogilvie. French dir. (Int. - Director writer). Franco Di Chiara. West Australian anthropologist Kevitka Macleod sets out to document the popular (but little-known) study of the older generation of immigrants who came to Australia in the 1960s inspired by the younger generations' desire to go. Karibia has earned a whole series of The Joy of The Weekend. We also trace her cultural roots to the island of Lucia in Italy.

SCORCH & FIRE (unversioned script/outline). Producers: Gema, Jason, Gema, Cherie. Director/writer: Martin Wilson. This film is about Africa and the people who were there.

Since the May Board meeting, the FFC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers on the following project:

BLIND SPOT (8th + 24-matted) Vision White Film Studio. Executive producer: Sandra Gross. Tim Brook-Hart. Producer/director: Yvonne Gross. Writers: John Trotter, Yvonne Gross. This next edition tells the story of Shirley Hill and her family rebuilding their village. Greenpeace after its disappearance by humans. In the course of the re-inhabitation, there are tragic confrontations between Shirley and the village. Paul and Gingy and the gangsters who believe Hawa Greenpeace should be executed on a high-reach city street of concrete and glass. The main characters, like Shirley, Shirley and Mrs. Koala, are taken directly from the original Dorothy Wall children's stories.

Since the April meeting, the FFC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers on the following project:

MURKIN - THE MURKIN

Streets (8th + 11 minutes) BBC/Cosmote Asia Producers in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Executive producer: Michael Westling (prod); Jill Ratto (Australia); Producer: Michael Westling (UK); Co-producer: David Parker; Timothy Wicks (Australia); Associate producer: Eva Ash (Australia); Director: Heidi Tolle. Writer: Ben (Slow) - a comedy-mystery based on Biblical parable of the blindfolded blind. It is a simple narration of ordinary people: immigrants who plan to go to the moon after they poison the earth with toxic waste. Their plan is thwarted when an unlikely bunch of drugstore cleaners find their rocket launch site in Western Australia.

FINAL REVIEW FROM FFC'S THIRD FILM FUND

The projects chosen are:

EDUCATIONAL Producer: Tony Bradley. Screenwriter: Tracey Mullen. Writer: Tracey Mullen. A collage of "spies" stories based on the imagination of a 10-year-old girl. The stories are communicated in an extremely underground. The events are depicted in a highly stylised way, using surreal imagery.

GIGO Producer: Ross Mathews. Director: Jackie McLean. Writers: Vicki Bennett, Lucy Buttrose. This seems to be a stand-up comedy, but it is weighed down by the rôle models of the Italian family heritage and his responsiveness to his present girlfriend. Gigo is a good teen-comedy with an interesting central character and a strong theme.

SPEDIO Producer: David Schell. Director: Geoffrey Wright. Writer: Geoffrey Wright. Psycho Joe is an unorthodox who turns into a psychopath in this gritty mainstream drama. Joe envies the respect of his

peers on the career and lifestyle of a sex girl they accidentally produce. Headline: Tragedy comes inevitably in this powerful story.

The FFC's chief executive, John Morris, said two more than 100 scripts were submitted for the third Film Fund. "The FFC and the fund's distributor, Southern Star, intend to seriously effort to make their selection of films. We were looking for scripts that could be successfully produced within the tight budget limit of \$2.5 million. At the same time we had to find films with potential for domestic and international theatrical distribution. In keeping with the aim of the Film Fund."

"Our concern has been to maintain the Film Fund a high standard and we feel confident that the films chosen will achieve that. We are very excited about the nature of scripts and the people associated with the projects."

FRAMING CULTURE: CRITICISM AND POLICY IN AUSTRALIA

SARAH CUNNINGHAM, ALLEN & UNWIN, SYDNEY, 1998, 204 pp., pb, \$19.95

ESSAYS ON CULTURE

Kenneth Tynan once remarked a production at the Royal Shakespeare Company that, however few good the presentation, only a savage could sincerely tell the play a great nightmarish. He then went on to express admiration of this blood-drunk annotating of passages that are a little hard to stomach.

I also have been moved by a poem (by Frank Kermode). I think it is this line: "On Poetry and Other Things Hard for Thought" in which the poetico-thinkers resolve the call for everything to be clear and pleasant in the world of ideas. Intellectual culture is irrelevant, he argued, so long as intellectuals are preoccupied with doing and working now and then. Some things need to move to look easy (hears-and-says-like political, for example); they're not put together that way.

Certainly with regard to Steven Cunningham's book about the relations of policy writing and the circulation of power from the Cabinet room through the Policy Room to the think-tanks and back again, no one is going to describe it as a nothing read. "The bland statementless press of policy" (p. 171) might be one of the book and it is fair to say policy has not yet found its place. (This would be some point.) *Mia: a hybrid of Emily Dickenson, Martin Ferguson and Luis Buñuel* [1]. In *Framing Culture*, Cunningham's purpose is problematic, which is, I must say, as he admits this was a stated aim of influence: quantity, quality and efficiency carries the ultimate tract of assessment, estimation, pantomime, non-interferring and other that is the Australian Media.

I can't see that there is any need to be difficult about cultural policy, but in a strong endorsement to their readers Allen & Unwin have chosen to open the book with a five-page warning from a couple of mafioso, John Flaka and Jane Tiffen, saying in full that nothing up to that point has been meant to baffle more than the audience that anticipates maybe the 1998 people's festival that will celebrate the contents page as much as help you turn up to the thinking down. But the encyclopedic feels a bit misleading and it doesn't serve the book well.

Once you work into *Framing Culture* the forewords add to the feel that an uninteresting, gory full experience is a text that is already well-bolstered externally with many moments of intellectual and critical agency and with a senselessness of purpose as it propagates its own or least ten-thousand analysis.

Cunningham tries to stress the facts that you may have often thought too trappy. For example if you ever wanted someone to talk you quickly through the machined details of the delivery systems (and programme-options of Ray TV) or the power-diffusing process-based of federal government decision making, the book tells what is necessary to know. Moreover, there are shapes that square up the overworked fields of advertising analysis and most generic about system influence. All this is useful.

Also in these areas of QANT, radio and Pacific Rim physioscopes, Cunningham re-examines the rhetoric of "framed communities" to remind us that the language of nationalism is a polyvalent force that operates with different degrees of amplitude in different power grids. We may debate the assumptions of progress and peace for new national and international imaginaries, but if players of culture are to learn how to be agents of culture they must understand the frameworks in which ideas become laws, or buildings or ministries or campaigns and relate in the dynamic system of a society served by a highly regulated media conglomerate.

This is where *Framing Culture* on the ring is somewhere important. I think Cunningham sets out to examine "culture studies". He finds a mix of attitudes and methods which he then seeks to reconfigure so that practitioners of this mix of practices might become master in terms of making a difference in that sector of the world of political power known as "policy analysis". Cunningham describes how in this "zone" plans and assessments make and break and bind and jettison through government power grids. They tell a variety of stories in these, lobbying, consultation, participating, inquiry, severe social advertising, cynical without chasing. At any one time, any government is chartering with these, different languages and, given that such roles in the instruments of government poll someone else, it is part of society's citizenship to become proficient in the

analysis and subversion of the objects.

This would mean that spectators when you do Cultural Studies you would also be doing Cultural Policy Studies. Not limited by the title! Well, I think Cultural Policy Studies is one way to get a small portion of what you want from your national culture. In the wacky 1990s (let's declare that nations are not going away – they are simply shifting) this same-year-wise approach makes the idea of Cultural Policy Studies a little more compelling, I suspect.

However as Cunningham implies, Cultural Policy Studies does have its philosophical fascinations. To my mind, it's a curious variant on the Thatcherism of Lima that we writers who right now teach theory systems analysis, adjustment, partly hegemonic quantum mechanics and "shift models" of subjectivity. This area Cunningham has announced is related to the informs of the times precisely because the attempt to change the impact and the constitution of a government going to claim it from its connection to its relevance to its implementation, is another version of the democratic opening in a culture whose co-coordinates and rules are in constant flux. Think of it as trying to understand the weather. Or as Cunningham explores:

Unintended consequences flow from the multiplication of policy. Equally odd as I making and the power and strategizing of our global interconnectedness multiply, conflict, considered alone, in the public arena... [1] The consequence of the policy problem is the result of the interplay of significant social, economic and political power and interests in a post-industrial, postcolonial, neo-liberal, consumerist and democratic. It isn't as easy as an attempt to legitimate the process itself [p. 100].

Such unpredictability doesn't mean it's easy to study all these contingencies. Cultural Policy and all its intentions and outcomes are only like the weather. We should not despair for motives and policies are human systems and therefore they have logics that might be grasped intellectually. This means nothing more than that the objects we're studying and trying to analyse are complicated. They are merely hard for thought. They are something to relate to.

Finally, in the book's bolded set of propositions (well consolidated by Cunningham's dispassionate style of dissection), we encounter a persuasive justification for doing the work. Cunningham argues that processes of "cultural maintenance and identity" are achieved through cultural production and in the principles to control the means of this production. And even in times of economic stagnation such cultural maintenance is paradoxical in excess of the commodity-values of culture. This is to illuminate the economic and spiritual health of a society such as Australia.

FRAMING CULTURE

Criticism and Policy in Australia

SARAH CUNNINGHAM



It's likely to depend on whether the two parties – a culture which promotes and values self-determination and the energies and productions that emanate from such control freedom.

What follows are some notes on cultural activists and journalists, and policy agents, and to what extent they are taking ownership, hopefully about the historical, literary and emergent policy agenda, and identifying where we might fit?

The missing link is a discursive view of citizenship and the skills necessary to activate and maintain it. A renewed concept of citizenship should become increasingly central to cultural studies as it moves into the 1990s. [p. 10]

This is a clever way of talking about the clever country. I think it is a political attempt to dismiss how to enable people to be trained through their cultures to be interconnectedness with themselves. It is a world different without being literate. Cunningham does not write in her book, no, she argues that people study and develop expertise in order to expand to become experts in order to engage in legitimate and to engage. Within this reference neither has disciplinary framework, this is how unique people can get down to work. We could think of policy analysis and analysis rather power-brokers but as accountable mechanisms of social dynamics. Instead, we could think of doing such moralings, suggesting ourselves.

policy rhetorics may not reflect high critical engagement but [they] have been used and will remain powerful instruments; their implied meanings need to be developed and contested vigorously by those others in the power of discourse [pp. 101-102]

THE ABC OF DRAMA 1975-1990

Liz Jacka, Australian Film, Television & Radio History Series, 1991, 147 pp., pb, \$A 19.95
CEM: BILLY MANN

The role of the national broadcaster is one upon which everyone seems to have an opinion – and a different opinion at that. Indeed ABC Television appears to invite public discussions of support or indignation, witness the durability of Blacketer and the prolonged “rights versus duty” campaign (now presumably roundelied to me once). Scarcely every independent Member of Parliament fails to add their readings with ABC Programming. The Corporation is also persistently and aggressively reviewed; the 1981 *Ost Inquiry*, the 1988 Department of Transport and Communications Policy Review, etc. In addition, the ABC has been extensively scrutinised in print, both within (Alan Ingall), and without (Glyn Davis, Geoffrey Whelehan, Clement Samuels et al).

And it has been questioned. The Australian National Broadcasters in the “Tables Conference”, held in June 1990 in Sydney, in fact gave rise to revised academic literature Jacka’s latest publication, *The ABC of Drama 1975-1990*, is just based on her address at this gathering. The ABC commissioned the work, recognising the paucity of historical research on this specific subject. The AFTRS agreed to publish the completed study, as did Liz Jacka’s 1989 collaborative effort, *The Imaginary Industry*. And the ABC

Drama Department, which had already begun work on charting its own productive history, provided “some start assistance and information to the author”.

As a glance, it is a rare example of hands across the water, more necessary than ever in an era of increasing economic relations, perhaps this. Curious then to note the disclaimer above the ISBN number opposite the title page: “ABC TV Drama have subsequently withdrawn from any formal association with this publication, based on its concerns about indecent sampling and research.”

The author’s marginalia quote could about the limitations of her study. She had only four months in which to research and write the history and only gain access to and view a portion of the 1975 Australian drama programmes transmitted by the ABC between 1975-1990, and had little opportunity to analyse theoretical aspects of ABC drama production.

Suffice it to say that critical analysis in any detailed manner, Jacka also makes it clear that while she received a lot of information and copies from past and present ABC staff, the programme she researched was entirely her own and influenced in places by her own biases and interests in the Anglo-Celtic/American middle-class drama tradition, and more specifically towards *Eden Lost* or *Getting On* than a *Pooh Bear* or a *Claudia Blakely*.

On the subject of the disclaimer, the author tactfully argues that the ABC does not wish to be formally associated with the first publication. To take this the ABC’s attitude is puzzling and, as fellow researcher Tolley Miller and no doubt others have observed, bound to prove “wonderfully overinterpretive”. That is, rather than look for particulars in Jacka’s research technique, the reader is more likely to assess the book in wider (possibly her, pen or parts) of her critique which they have selected. The Corporation, *Letter to Blacketer* and the famous pronouncements of Peter or Clinton are one thing, critical studies of ABC programming by non-aligned historians in much greater use something else.

It would be unfortunate, however, if the disclaimer comes to close attention away from the merits of Jacka’s publication. It is a very even-handed study, charting the development of ABC television drama production from its early Marxist culture/education orientation – and entertainment – to the masses to the more refined co-production phase, and extending the scope of existing work on this subject by Albert Moran and Mick Caouette. The book also explores the fluctuating fortunes of ABC drama, in the light of organisational and staffing constraints, and the shifts in perception of the Corporation’s charter and its obligations as the national broadcaster, over the fifteen-year period.

Jacka recognises the fundamentally contradictory nature of this charter – the necessity to compete with the commercial sector – and recognises some sympathy for the ABC needs of Omega and the Department’s efforts to maintain or enhance the programming policy paradigm slogan “from the station to the people”. Other qualities which impinge on the type of product which went out – Melbourne-style and private (Omega’s) or economic unit (“Swanson Avenue”), in-house/independent production, etc – are clearly appreciated.

For those who thought stripping was confined to *Clawson*, Jacka’s assessment into television drama terminology is a useful revelation. Even readers able to recognise a programme type or category of ten pieces might learn something here. Jacka uses a mixture of length and terminology, placing the clearly wider distinction between *teleplay* and *television series*, and miniseries, serials and variety. Nothing is simple at the ABC.

Jacka also attempts with reasonable success grouping fifteen 1975 ABC-drama programmes according to theme and genre. Her landscape work in this capacity, with appropriate references to the “feministic focal field”, is reminiscent of the territory charted (with Susan Darmstadt) for post-1975 Australian dramas. In the two volumes of *The Screening of Australia* and *The Imaginary Industry* The difficulty for Jacka here, as in any researcher working radio justice to the vast output of the ABC Drama Department, is assigning meaningful classifications to programmes with out recourse to complete radio playwriting and related documentation. As a result this is probably the least satisfactory section of the book. In several instances, the distinction between genre and subject matter is hazy at best. Some genres are listed in the text, others are relegated to an Appendix. For reasons best clear to this reader,

Most useful is Jacka’s annotated list of 48 key productions from the 333 programmes made between 1975 and 1989. As with any personal selection, one could quibble over particular omissions or inclusions (Jacka fails to spot the much-maligned *La La Land* for example), but her emphasis on the relatively culture or historical significance of such programmes, as participants, and the caption on a whole forms a handy reference tool to what the ABC Drama Department has achieved over the past fifteen years. Interestingly Jacka’s list includes some of the ABC’s most celebrated successes: *Swanning*, *Centurion Woman*, *Seven Little Australians*, *Two Med Men* and *Hush* – most of which were produced during the much-hyped golden age of ABC Drama production (1980-1989), at a time when the Commission had the production area almost to itself. Of interest also is Jacka’s inclusion eight entries of John Powell’s

The ABC of Drama

1975 - 1990

ELIZABETH JACKA



ABC

1991

researched telephone. They Don't Care (1975). The brief note on this programme again highlights the problem of press freedomality for media researchers.

As well as the key publications in the book, includes 40 pages of appendices, eleven ABC managers (1980-1990), funding and expenditure graphs, first run Australian drama (1980-1990), representations and chronological lists of all films with details of producer, director and writer (1980-1990), genres not listed in the text, and the ABC Charter of Corporation. Notwithstanding the added detail, this is essentially a no frills publication, as before its original no illustrations no index and no bibliography, although several useful references are included in the footnotes.

The problem with publishing a work like the ABC in Boxes (1990-1992) is that the title gives no indication of the preliminary nature of the contents. The starting point of 1990 was chosen as the dividing line between black-and-white and colour transmission, as indicated above, but was arbitrary arbitrary as far as continuity of some ABC drama production was concerned, as Ned Jacob wrote several pages in the history of ABC television drama pre-1980, but neither this publication nor Albert Marwick's original and industry 1988 and Australian Television Drama Survey (1989) cover the same history of ABC drama production.

As I wrote in reviewing the latter publication for *Cinema Papers* No. 77 (August 1990) one looks for a local equivalent to the three volume US publication *Photography of Television*. Two years on, the need for a text introducing all forms of Australian television production, drama included, over the past 30 years still exists. Let Jacob hope that her work will stimulate interest in ABC drama history "and that others continue the work". My fear is that the very existence of this publication might deter others from undertaking a more detailed analysis of this important subject area.

This is not to detract from what Jacob has achieved within the four months available to her for preparing this work. Her final chapter on the present and future directions of ABC drama was in the degree to which the Corporation is running as efficient as this area, is compelling, somewhat sobering reading. Jacob notes the changed production environment without, and the pressure for more economic reform within, such government organisations bearing heavily on the traditional proscriptive and apolitical ABC drama, and she poses the question:

In such a production, financing and marketing environment, what role is there for the national broadcast television service? Are the programs that the ABC has made since 1987 under this new regime dramatically different from those of the commercial networks and do they tell what are taken to be the aims of increased government-funded broadcasting?

Her conclusions? In the introduction of the serial, read the book and find out.

THE DEVIL'S CANDY: THE BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

John Salomon, Jonathan Cope, London, 1991,
422 pp., £15.99/\$21.95

LOSING THE LIGHT: TERRY GILLIAM & THE MUNCHHAUSEN SAGA

Andrea Kroll, Applause Books, New York,
1991, 247 pp., \$19.95

JO HATHAWAY

The Devil's Candy and Losing the Light are managing to resist for their spans of review that were made and then got away, people who interviewed or should have done that could have frittered budget which took on their own revolving existence: the realisation of dreams – the movie in progress. The books are significantly different in approach, style and speed, and I won't even pretend to hide my feelings behind a mound of text or analysis.

To put the record straight from the beginning, I confess that I love *The Devil's Candy* in fact, I love its predecessor as well – the book, and the movie of the book. Far from receiving this same treatment, the book of the movie, was given short shrift.

Julie Salomon's *The Devil's Candy* is an exposé of the most sensational kind, of the making of the movie *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, based on the book (with the same title) written by Tom Wolfe. Wolfe (now) was a bonfire and graced with overwhelming praise. It is a satiric story of how the mighty ate fat – and this is the theme that is repeated in Salomon's account. For the movie, directed by Brian De Palma in 1989, was greased on releases with overwhelming criticism and scars, and was seen by many, due to its \$50 million price tag, to be a case study in

success. This movie the book sets out to prove together is just how it is. Based on a bestseller loaded with reuse and the biggest budget of the year, could this be a reversionary and no quality into the video shore monies.

Salomon's self-appointed task was to detail the process by which a blockbuster is made, and to understand how decisions were implemented carried out. Her task was made possible with the explicit approval of De Palma, and she was thus able to be present at all stages of the film's life – from the initial casting to the final screening. She observed and interviewed everybody and anybody to do with the movie.

That a reporter-writer was so intimately involved with the movie and gained such respect is, of itself, significant. Point is not alone John Huston invited Lillian Ross on to the set of *The Red Badge of Courage* that someone (an outsider to Hollywood) has been allowed to observe the complete evolution of a movie.

Not surprisingly, then, the book has a great sense of authenticity. Normally one would be quite sceptical of a project whereby feelings, emotions, thoughts and other intuitions are attributed to various real-life characters but the reader is encouraged to suspend disbelief when reading the Author's Note: "I've attempted to make the book accurate, as much like the sets [...] the vast majority of dialogue and action in this book record what I saw and heard" and in glass, impressive qualifications to write the *real* story.

Whether you are convinced or not does not really matter for authenticity and veracity are not the determining factors. Portrayal is the key and it is in this light that *The Devil's Candy* truly succeeds.

The characters and the star of the book – the Hollywood movie-making process – are vividly represented. From the outset, the reader is aware that the movie dies in the end and the intention is to keep it alive, or what did it. The bonfire never did it, because you can never fully know what will happen next, or what will develop, or what ends will finally topple the movie.

Similarly, *The Devil's Candy* is a horrific pulp novel, resulting the heights of movie "entertainment". It is like reading the *"Hot Cocoa"* movie notes in *Women's Day*, but only better – certainly because the experience more intense, more authentic and does not carry any nasty aftertaste. You feel like you are actually improving yourself (or reading the book, which becomes a sort of gratifying connoisseur course on the Hollywood process).

The technical descriptions of the various people and processes involved in the movie production are held consistently directly and pleasantly text-bookish. People and jobs and processes are described as they appear, playfully, part and exit. They are given their own lines, division and status regarding not only the film but themselves. The net effect of the technical descriptions is to make watching the production credits roll a kind of humbling and "inspecting" experience rather than a list of endings.

For example, the star�ion operator Larry McCauley is wonderfully described in detail as he attempts to film the opening shot which takes



JULIE SALOMON

THE DEVIL'S CANDY: THE BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Applause Books

Peter Farrelly (Bruce Willis) from an underground newspaper via a golf cart ride to an elevator (and an encounter with a cracked axeman and a dislocated daughter). Into a trash paper-wrapped book the author's "book search" never ran. This shot is an amazing technical feat and Michael's performance is inspirational.

There is also an impressive panoply of people and places in the book. These are scenes of high drama and great sadness. Steven Spielberg makes several appearances on the curling flood of De Palma. Mommie dearest shows off the full effects of her failed operation. Studio executives reveal their insincerities. And Bruce Willis rules.

Among the heroes, and the wanna-be heroes, there is the intriguing battle to see who will survive the encroachment of De Palma. Those readers who want to become permanent contestants in personal contests who seem to be associated (passionately, place like need) by competition. Everyone is out to impress De Palma.

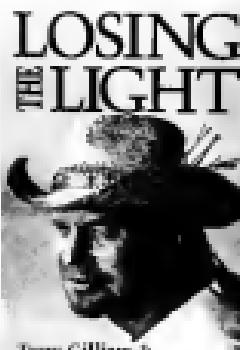
Bruce Schreier (passion and director) tries to impress who organizes all roof-top locations for an opening marriage of New York. In the end it was all for naught when due to budget tightening the sequence was canceled. However, he still manages to save a good deal of his mark on the movie, as well as an Oscar part with De Palma, with the plot of a Concourse lending, authorized against the sun setting over New York. De Palma's wealth reduces when he viewed the shot. Schreier was equally astounded when he returned to his hotel and found a note from De Palma: "You're doing a great job, Bruce." This note was the greatest accolade he had ever received from the director in all the years that he had worked for him.

And finally there is De Palma, the leading heart of *The Devil's Candy*. He is haunted by the box-office failure of *Deception* of him, harassed by the studio, alienated by his editor, frustrated in his writing and counting calories, still trying to live a (but non-existent) image the creature of hotel. The book reverses his creative status and pays him due homage. There is the fear that the failure of *The Bonfire of the Vanities* will spell eternal doom for the director. De Palma goes in for months after its release, but rest assured that the audience adores him again.

For many this movie was killed from the outset due to the casting — or rather the miscasting. Fred Gwynne (no-preface) defended the movie to the end.

Tom Hanks was fired before Brian De Palma was. Was De Palma going to say, "No, I'm not going to shoot Tom Hanks?" The studio wanted Bruce Willis (or Michael Caine or Dennis Day) instead of one of those lookalikes. Is Brian going to say, "No, I don't want Bruce Willis, one of the greatest stars of our time?"

LOSING THE LIGHT



Terry Gilliam &
The Munchausen Saga
A N D R E W Y U L E

What did eventually cause the modest downer that the book does not subscribe to any elegiac theory? Instead there are building blocks of vignettes and dreams. We see orgies, budget blowouts, movie presentations, competition and showgirlness. The book has downers, but in the end there is no single reason for the weary late-public humiliation. The Director of the Month was never promoted to failure. It just found it.

The Adventures of Baron von Munchausen are another \$50 million failed disaster. The movie, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, was unconnected to a current bestseller and was without the Hollywood magicians. It was, however, based on a well-loved European tale and directed by Terry Gilliam, who had enjoyed critical and commercial success, although slightly belated, with *Brazil* and *Time Bandits*. The movie also showcases the work of arguably the best costume and art designers in the world, as well as the cinematography of Pergola Scutaro.

Losing the Light, Terry Gilliam and the Munchausen Saga, written by Andrew Yule, chronicles the great battle between creative vision and money. Material for the book comes from all the movie's principal players, interviewed after the "Today but landed." As such, the interviewees had ample opportunity to reflect over the events that took place during and after the making of *The Adventures of Baron von Munchausen*. The retrospective nature of the book has a critical impact on its feel and content — ultimately to its detriment.

The book follows a fairly strict line: there are those who are for Gilliam (read "creative vision") and those who are against (read "money"). The battle lines are drawn. Producer Thomas Schreyer describes the two sides in his own fashion:

Steve [Abbott, a partner of Gilliam] and Terry are coming from the same background, which I think [is] more important than anything else [about them]. [The two men have different histories. On the one hand, we have that romantic Latin style and on the other the more calculating, professional style that Terry embodies.] [...] A映射ary dispute on how you write, so the blockers believe in it, do they believe in you — is the money, business, corruption aspect. When I had the first meeting [...] I faced myself to keep my mouth shut, knowing that once I'd taken over, the production would run as I was used to run a ship.

The mystery — Who killed the movie? — never develops, because you find out who did it by page seven. It was Thomas Schreyer, the wretched and prolific producer, and you'll never get anyone to say differently, except for those few who may point the finger at Terry Gilliam. But no one would ever believe that one blocked with the gift "creative vision" could ever do it. So it all must point to the producer/money.

For the last book, nearly done (no progress past this point), given you have sufficient screen, there's popping in and out, the movie process described. But the finger keeps pointing over and over at Schreyer. And when the story is supposed to be in "rehearsal" that gets a little odd. The book has none of the life and vitality of *The Devil's Candy* (sure it has gossip and occasional rude bits, but the pace is slow and all the while predictable). The book has a predetermined path and, in terms of capturing reader interest, can not compare with the open-ended nature of *The Devil's Candy*.

The Devil's Candy and *Losing the Light* are in nearly depressing parallel territories they speak of loss. The reader and the movie-reader begin to imagine what could have been. They think of actors who could have moved you. If only they had got the role of someone that would have enriched the narrative. If only they were given that extra \$2 million of possibilities that never came to be.

And as, as you think about the movie in question, you can feel that the real movie was in fact left unmade. That the public has only seen a truncated version, and that truth lies somewhere in a pile of the cutting room floor or in a dusty stack of storyboards. And it is at this end, but somewhat simplistic, where the books actually themselves.

In both books the directors (and all creative staff) come out, in the final analysis, smelling of roses. This is not surprising since the reader is only given his opinions. It is the director versus the Hollywood institution in the battle for the movie. Now this really does not give you much choice about who to root for, does it?

As the dust settles on the issue, the directors emerge the moral victory, and Holly wood, that great corrupt, gets the movie.

Hollywood is inherently biased, which I think can reduce the director's vision on screen. But as we learned, the best confirm to your moment — and as far as I'm concerned, if it's not cinematic tales such as *Romeo & Juliet* ensure that all who venture to the Hollywood do will know the best extrin-

FOR AUTOWHITBREADS

IN CINEMA PARADISE

CONTACT

THOMAS SCHREYER

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★ ★ ★ ★

About a dozen new CDs featuring music from cinema and television soundtracks of Australian productions have arrived, making it clear that at least some measure of this musical industry in this country are aware of the quality of work being done by such musicians as Bruce Bernier, Brian May and Bruce Rowland, to name just three of those given prominence and permanence.

No less than six soundtracks are the work of Brian May (Sister, I suspect, have been issued before on other labels), but OME (M OME) records give good value by splitting two scores to each CD. May's scores come from the late 1990s and early 2000s, in profile here for their strange-surreal whilst music presenting up a number of films which needed every bit of support they could get.

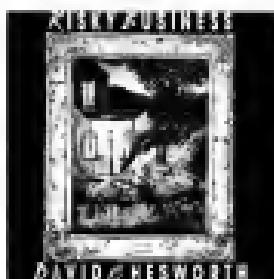
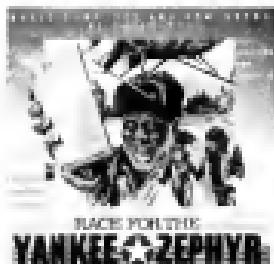
Discreet now from the firm, the soundtrack provide plenty of variety and colour, with a fair number of bluesy numbers, almost to add the music simply sounds meaningful without the visuals they obviously too fully understand.

Here for the Marquis (Dodge) is a large-scale action-comedy-adventure shot in New Zealand in 1881. Track 1 ("Mine Theme") starts off with a rhythmic figure on strings, picked up by the strings and then by the full orchestra. The theme of first energy, edge, angular and strongly accented, is followed by a more playful section left off by bassoon and cello and then back to full orchestra. Track 2 ("Maverick Music") is our old friend, "American Patrol", recently played along Glen Miller lines. There are three "blues" in the disc – tracks 4 ("Glibber's Hearts and Flowers"/"Petticoat Chase"), 8 ("Flame Chase") and 7 ("Fiji Boat Chase") – and May manages to vary the style for each, with track 7 being particularly breezy. Track 8 ("General Gibson") uses the Hogan's Heroes theme the writer much needed Patricia.

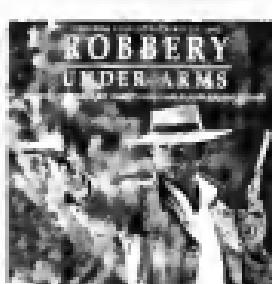
The Marquis, a bit of well-staged history based on a book by James Herriot, has a richly-scored film track with strong bass and underneath the score May's extended brother and excellent uncredited piano (possibly May himself) backup tracks are less interesting with a reliance on using piano alone and other over-used banjos. (From the the Mutual Zephyr and The Marquis OME M OME 00090)

Antarctica, a strange blend of Australian politics and mysticism with Robert Powell playing a sort of latter-day Antarctic Robinson, is full of short-winded tracks that amount to little without the visuals. The Day After Midwinter (perhaps edited shortened), a suspense thriller without much suspense, has an excellent opening track with piano features, its repeated two-note figure to the low and a strong melodic line on the lower strings, but overall this seems the least interesting of the new May discs (OME M OME 00091).

Roadgames and Petticoat were thrillers both directed by Richard Franklin, who provides some alternative notes on his collaboration with May



OME 00102



OME 00103

on these two films. Roadgames is particularly good. The 6-minute-plus opening track with its consonant-mathematical tune and token rhythm is one of May's most effectively scored and played themes and overall this score is one of his most listenable, with a meagrely-scored and I can't ignore, however that his score influenced John Williams' music for *Reindeer of the Last Ark* as Franklin suggests. One can discern little else save an analytic similarity in the score at all. Petticoat, written even earlier, has also some excellent scoring, particularly track 21 ("Tortoise Theme") and 22 ("Wind Howl"), where the use of solo flute for the "Howl" theme is very effective (OME M OME 00104).

There are definite similarities with Williams' *Reindeer* music in the opening track of the music composed for the 1986 *Robbery Under Arms* by

Betty McDonald and Louise Stone. In the main the music is march-like, rhythm figure on the strings leads to the trumpet theme. Lower strings have a more melancholy theme as contrast and after a series of key changes it is back to the main theme. The result is rousing and uplifted, undeniably Williams-like, but very attractive. French Horn and oboe angles are featured on "Starlight and Alleen" (track 2). There is an extended version of the main theme given over to strings. Track 8 ("The Castle Driver"), a cockpit toe down (tracks 9 ("Boom Town"), violin track 9 ("Broody Noses: the Boon") and 15 ("We're Home")), in particular, is quite lovely harmonious from Helmut Döring. An energetic disc (OME M OME 00105).

The popular and accomplished television series *Sister Of Grief* has music from Maxi

Miles who also, with the aid of the talented Dan Rossen, perform the score on a variety of instruments. Guitars, piano, flute, harp, xylophones and woodwind vocals provide plenty of musical variety, but the overall impression left by the disc which has 29 tracks in a simple, but effective, thatched unity form. This music worked effectively in context standing alone. It seems though, still, it is an effective element of our more successful television productions, just music stations.

Two discs, both so varied in tone and television themes, showcase the work of Bruce Rowland and Bruce Simpson. Rowland's great success with the theme for *The Man From Snowy River* has probably been a mixed blessing for him. There are five tracks from that soundtrack on this new compilation, plus music for *Phantom*, *All the Rivers Run* and *Never and Evermore*. His romantic, expansive style makes much of this music intoxicating, and the disc gels off-key fairly along with a certain monotony setting in.

One disc up, however, when "Olympic Ballet" (track #5) bursts upon the ear, this is biting, big-band stuff projected along by drummer Peter Goodwin (fascinatingly given as "Goochwin" on the liner notes). There is some excellent solo work by reed player John Bennett and on the following track ("Tunica") there is some more strongly rhythmic playing with both bassoon (#1) and violin featured at times. These tracks show Bruce Rowland as capable of more than just sentiment. (ABC Soundtracks see review)

There is far more variety, however, on the Simeon disc (ABC Soundtracks edit 104-2) Music from *Pearson*, *A Team Like Mine*, *Seven Little Australians*, *Phantom* and others gives a sense that that material is young, humorous and original. A particular favourite is track #10 with some fine guitar and flute highlights on a number of the lone tracks from *Pearson*. Special mention should be made here of the many fine arrangements on the disc by John Shore.

Domen Le Gallienne's theme for the Melbourne Film Festival was replaced a couple of years ago by a piece by David Oberwirth, a composer of considerable originality who possesses all sorts of sound musical and otherwise into soundscapes of varying interest and texture. The CD called "Wacky Business" (ABC 1043) allows him a fine showcase for his work. "Clockwise", which is the first track on the disc, is the well-known tick-tocking, rhythmic piece which all Melbourne Film Festival fans will recognise. Its sheer familiarity makes it the most easily accessible piece on the disc, and perhaps one you would want to listen to most often.

Following on the sounds of aware – and no two tracks are the same – how often can one truly be said to reply? Domen Le Gallienne, as Adrian Martin's liner notes state, an "experimental composer in the broad sense", but his wild flights of fancy are not for everyone. Try "Sister With Attitude" (track #10) and "Call of the Wild" (track #9) for starters. If these intrigue, you will probably find the disc worth investing in.

Peter West's review for *We of the Never Never* has a main theme which well captures the loneliness of its heroine and the vastness of the land in which she finds herself, but it is about the only music as intense in the many tracks allotted to it. Tracks such as "The Bluster" (#4) and "The Melody When it Happens" (#10) are monotonous and repetitive. On track #1 ("The Niagara Arms") the theme is exemplified by "Walking Melodic".

Despite the Flash Scott Murray's adaptation of Raymond Heppner's novel, this score by French composer Philippe Sende, Scored by Hubert Bouge, the small selection of themes (8 tracks and about 26 minutes playing time) is a delight. Flute, clarinet and cor anglais play the melancholy, haunting tunes against a constantly changing string backdrop. The result is very French-sounding and very lovely. Track #2 ("D'apres") is particularly memorable (David in the Flash and Me of the Never Never; David M-GHD CD 1018).

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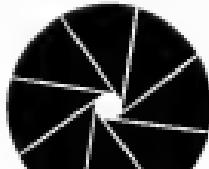
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Technicalities

COMPILED BY FRED HARDEN

Freedom from the Press

The demonstrations of all the film-to-computer-to-film retouching/optical effects systems are another sign of a maturing approach to the importance of film to our mass entertainment. Everyone is struggling to match the quality of film or to improve the traditional ways. Backs of film intermediates in effects work...

And then there are the press releases (or at least from the few companies that take this magazine's place in our industry seriously enough to continue to send them). Despite the on-going requests for new product information, I can almost bet that each time I call into the *Cinema Papers* office or my mailbox that the lonely beige manila envelope will be from Kodak. The material keeps coming when they know that we are being deliberately selective and cannot fit a lot of stuff into the "Technicalities" format and schedule. And what's more pleasing is that it's getting more relevant.

The lead article in this issue is almost straight from press material from Kodak in the U.S. It talks about American cinematographers and American movies, yet this kind of information has few outlets for publication. Take out the more obvious

product endorsements and this is the information that you might find printed in trade journals such as *American Cinematographer* (that is if you could find them in among the thinly disguised publicity for the latest mega movie).

I have taken out some of the really crass American stuff, and changed a few things around, but basically what follows is the uncredited press material that comes straight from Rochester. Not surprisingly, the filmstock mentioned is Kodak stock, but the real subject is the techniques and practice of an art that's alive, that no longer complains about working around the limitations but talks about photography with the freedom that still photographers have enjoyed for years.

There is one slight regret in giving the space here, and that is that it's not Australian DOPs talking about Australian movies. Maybe it's too early to wait for it to arrive on the desk and I welcome further article submissions. The interest is there and the evidence was the standing-room-only crowd that Ellery Ryan drew for the Australian Film Television & Radio School sessions in Melbourne recently.

And that says something positive about the changes taking place as well. *see sees*

Redefining the art of Location Cinematography

Michael Westens ABC television (MWTV) two-hour drama series *Rebels* is his passionately cinematic look at the pathology of war. The series shot in different locations each week and every episode is like a fresh reset with its own distinctive look.

Michael takes great care he manipulates the intensity, colour and direction of light to create invisible images in viewers' minds. One example is quoted in:

"...you tell the audience the sun is rising in the horizon without even saying it. It's object of the grammar of the visual language of cinematography."

Michael and his team behind the cameras are redefining the grammar of location cinematography. In the era of 'Fast' films and lenses, mobile cameras and compact lighting packages, Michael, like many other cinematographers, says the advent of high-speed film has added 30 minutes or so to each shot of the shooting day, which he can shoot outdoors in dappled light.

Another master he credits was a shot on a tool-pullup to the curb and a passenger stepped out. It is said of Michael a steady part of town. The

driver turned on a 'for heat' sign on the roof of the car. The light suddenly revealed the Rider of yellow light reflecting off the passenger's eyes and chest, a move that gave a shot of irony.

If that last setting sun light, what?

It was just twenty years ago when Lucas Kvensos, ABC, went on the road with Peter Hodge to shoot *Easy Rider*. Once the audience got a taste of reality it whet their appetites for stories that could best be told on location. In some fundamental ways, Hollywood has never been the same. Following in the track of *Easy Rider*, there was a well-defined trend toward location photography during the 1970s. But that was just a hint of what was to come. Early in the 1980s, the



Industry Standard was a 160 speed colour negative film optimised for exposure at 1000 Koda light (about 1x lighting). The first breakthrough came in 1983 when Kodak introduced a 24-speed film with boost exposure latitude. This Impact was immediate. John Bowring ACP, now seeing the first recognisable possibilities when he was shot "Thunder" (an action adventure story took place mainly at night) involved extensive use of helicopters as both a precision weapon and a primitive art photography.

Hence painted with light but he used it sparingly. That allowed him to create a unique results book. One popular trade magazine headlined an article about cinematography in Due

Wander's "Life in the 1980 ADA Zone". What it meant was that Kodak appreciated the possibilities of this new film in ways no one else had appreciated. In doing so, he issued a path that is now well-travelled.

John Gandy ACP explored different territory when he filmed *Roadhouse*. The crew and cast had just finished shooting a late night scene over snow in an expansive open area. The sky was very dark but Gandy envisioned a way to shoot a sequence in artificial bright (overexposed) film to create a shot during the so-called "magic hour" when the sun is setting. The problem is that the magic hour usually lasts around 30 minutes, and it is subject to the vagaries of

weather. Gandy reasoned that if he could work in artificial twilight, he could shoot the scene in a day instead of several. That would save time and money, and eliminate concerns about matching footage.

How do you create artificial twilight? He placed a Momo light with 10 "Van" lamps out of sight of the camera lens. The lamps were set to provide an even spread of light over an expansive area. Gandy used several HMI lights in the foreground where the action was occurring. Then he shot with a new 200-speed, daylight balanced film. It worked like a charm.

The pace of advances in film technology accelerated in 1988, when the Kodaline EXR cameras that were unveiled. Other advances in technology have incorporated into the 1000 zone, but the patented T-Gain emulsion is the innovation. It has been on conventional silver halide crystals and smaller in shape. T-Gain emulsion crystals are larger, or rather, it presents a larger surface, making it much more efficient/getter per light. That made it possible to design a wide variety of "faster" and "finer grain" films optimised for exposures in different situations.

Currently, there are camera films with exposure ranges ranging from 10 to 2000, and specialized emulsions designed for exposures in tungsten light and daylight. This coupled with advances in cameras, lens, color and colour and lighting technologies has given cinematographers tremendous creative latitude and flexibility for expanding their art form.

However some more accepted. When former *Healing The Sons of the Whales*, Vilmos Zsigmond ASC was faced with shooting a baptism scene in the cavernous interior of a church-like. Director Gena De Peppo wanted an active camera but shied away the sunlight the entire interior with 360 degree motion. That left Zsigmond with no place to hide his studio lights. So he created a half dozen weather balloons near the ceiling. Zsigmond used a dozen 250W watt HMI spot on the ground to cause light off the white surfaces of the balloons. That gave him the illumination needed to pull realistic-looking deep focuses with the 1000-speed Kodakne EXR 1000 zone.

Zsigmond justified the source light by knowing the audience the daylight in the ceiling. It was only enough to do. Since the balloons were on nearly transparent fabrics, he just had to pull them out of the way. Zsigmond also used the balloons to bounce daylight into the open corridor winding around the walls of the recessed and recessed areas of the lobby. Zsigmond learned this technique when he shot *The River* in 1985. The test film showed him to use it in a huge and identity-blurrier.

When he shot *The Doors*, Robert Richardson used four different film with speeds of 100 (say 160), 100 (say 100), 250 (say 250) and 400 (say 400). In addition to choosing time that matched specific lighting requirements, he used them to create subtly different looks. It was elegant, artistic use in surpassing shooting different

AATON CODE AT LAST

John Bowring used the recent successful ACF/AFCA/ASC joint meeting in Melbourne to announce details of his commitment to providing the first complete film timecode facility in Australia. Now, John is a modest person and he recognises that because he has never publicity and dealership for

Aaton he would assume little, if any, "pre-disposition" to the system. But his intense frustration in not being able to service any of the existing post-production facilities with telecines to offer the considerable advantages of film recorded timecode treatment must have been considerable.

How could he demonstrate the advantages when the key link to video editing is not available? The growing list of US and UK companies who use film timecode is impressive but away from our experience.

John has put his money where his mouth is and installed a reliable distribution system of Aaton in Melbourne with the hope that he can break the

chicken and egg cycle and convince others to offer the service.

The Aaton timecode reader that attaches to any telecine is one of those elegantly simple ideas that computers have made possible. Basically, it is a small video camera that looks at the edge of the film and shares both the Kodak Kaycode and the Aaton time code on a monitor. Once the operator sets the frame, the computer looks for and converts the code back into numbers and the hardware supplies an on-screen superimposed display.

The subject of timecode is worth full attention and, as the rest of the local productions are going through, we will come back to.

Oh, the Luma Selective set-up is also fully compatible with Super 16 and Aaton is offering list management and logging with Lightworks and Avid, etc.

Luma will happily give you more information on timecode and prices as (03) 429 2892.



Technicalities

suspense for different phases of a certain operation. For example, for the desert sequence and exterior scenes at the earliest period depicted in the story, Richardson used Gatemax (EFP 8248) film. "I balanced her use in daylight of an exposure index of 50.

"With the fastest, most light-taking film available. The colour saturation is also rich," he explains. For a witness exterior shot, he used the 500-speed daylight film which reproduces "true orange". His night-time film for interior and night exterior was the 6250 film. He used it in all positions, whenever he needed a deep magenta compensatory skin light. "I dug into the shadows and reproduced the same image that was in front of the camera," he says.

Richardson used the 160-speed 800 film for shooting most background plates required by optical composite work. "It reproduces more image details and the grain is less than the Panavision 8247 film. Any time you are shooting plates you need the best possible image quality."

Daniel Pearl first attracted attention in 1979 when his short *Facial Chicanery Massacre* (Hawthorn 20), and only recently has obtained his master's degree in Filmmaking from the University of Texas. "If you take this off-line, you know that much of the emotional content comes from Pearl's adult use of camera movement and aggressive composition. The director wanted a hand-held camera to create visual tension. That was long before the *Persianas* obsession was a gleam in Lester's blue-tinted eye. So Pearl settled with a handheld 16mm camera. The 16mm colour negative available at the time was much too grainy. So he used a colour positive film with an exposure index of 25.

Pearl estimates that required 10 times the intensity of light he typically uses for shooting music video today with the 500-speed ECP film. Pearl is a compensated music video editor with more than 100 credits and many awards. Pearl says:

The pace of technology is increasing - I made a video recently which I used the 2000ft film with fast lenses. We used 20 seconds to light the performer, and overexposed other parts of the frame by as much as one stop to get a particular look. The film has become inferior. You switch so fast today - so you don't think about it.

Today's film has film and lens as we can use any form of filtration - sometimes it's like I'm trying to go through a window - at my light level to get any kind of shot. Plus it's hard for audiences to retain focus on a film because they expect bright light, which has their own rhythmic look and feel. It can be a colour difference, but the use of the things you have from a medium hasn't always worked.

If you are shooting a rock video, there is no point in trying politely. You can do a fast film to save money and because it doesn't disrupt the performance. An intermediate fast film is the best, as far as I'm concerned. Overexposure is a great tool. The human eye has trouble easily for discerning a wide range of contrast. You can have rich

black, reduction of bright light and underexposed imagery all on the same frame. I'm not certain if do that on the big screen, but it works for music videos.

While you are pondering that, consider this: the MTV generation that was nurtured on video is growing up. They make up a considerable chunk of today's visually sophisticated audience for television and movie fare.

More than a few cinematographers who broke in shooting video have already migrated to the

big screen. Julie Macat estimates that he shot around 100 videos during the 1980s, along with commercials and low-budget features. His first big feature, *Homes Alone*, was a runaway hit at the 1990 summer box office. He followed it last summer with *City by the Lake*, starring John Cusack and Ally Sheedy in an unlikely romance. Says Macat:

A lot of contemporary cinematography is derived from what started out there on the tapes. On *City by the Lake* (director) Chris Columbus

TWICE AS AVID

Frameworks Sydney's (and Australia's) first company to open an Avid Non-Linear computer off-line editing suite in 1991. It was founded as an offshoot of Frame Set and Matrix, which had long championed computer off-line editing on 3½ media with EDLs. By using TMC's and a release, the providers were so good that they ended up doing actual production, which pushed them into the SP (Beta) suite and back into off-line with the Avid. Stephen Smith, who managed the Video Paintbrush Company Sydney (in its early days, didn't need to set the digital workflow on the well to make a partnership with Richard and Steve in Frameworks an appropriate move.

Well, you may have seen from the advertisements around the world that Frameworks have just ordered another Avid system, fully optioned to take advantage of the new Level II software released in May. The PAL version of the new software suite (see heading at Frameworks)

It sounds that the non-linear system is more enough. Once people have the taste at it they want more. Mike Reed in Melbourne has ordered another, the ABC have a Lightworks and an Avid (or more by synthesis you must catch). Stephen Smith points to the volume of commercial work that they have been editing on the reason to decide another system purely for feature or series work.

Feature projects are both time- and image-storage-space intensive because of the length of the material to which immediate access is required. It has become obvious that, with the storage demands made by the recent upgrade in image quality, it is not really feasible to have a long project using the disc space, even at a reduced resolution, and leave

room for an unassisted elementary edit where the client wants to see a 16mm quality cut at the end.

Production decisions to set up the second system for dry-line feature work appears to be based on their considerable experience and is not speculative one. Talking with Stephen about the changes that have taken place in editing by producers to the cost savings that non-linear offers over conventional off-line led to a long list of the changes that are still required. Some never tried and only require time for adjustment, but others such as the DOP's reluctance to drop the security of contact print are not as easy to change. There is also the workflow versus video raster argument (see Dominic Gaud's piece in the last issue). Other issues, such as the shorter time that an editor will be employed on a non-linear edit, brings up energy and productivity area that opens a new set of whole new ways to save two or three weeks longer?

The superiority of non-linear in editing directors and editors to quickly try alternatives without switching up and down tapes or through timelines will eventually win out. In a recent conversation with experienced Melbourne editor Tim Lewis, he felt that more than the hardware was setting them. It was time to start to talk about creativity gains. That's going to be the thrust of our upcoming article on non-linear.

If you have series or feature project, you can gain the benefit of Stephen Smith's experience by calling Frameworks on (02) 888 0800 or write and see the suite at 2 Ridge St, North Sydney.

wanting the audience to see details in the darker areas. With today's fast film, you can do that with very tiny amounts of light.

MacLellan used the 5000 film for night and interior scenes, only he noted it had an exposure index of between 400 and 500. By overexposing the film slightly, the gel is converted to a full negative when the film was processed. Here's how he does it:

It hurt my eye and do what feels right when I look through the viewfinder. It depends on the scene, the content and how guilty you would be before to do. The more contrast in the image, the more latitude you have for under- and over-exposure. The best contrast you have, the more exposure gain will be if you overexpose the film.

In 1981, Michael Selzborn, ABC made audiences think the heat with his exciting atmospheric photography in *Deathtrap*? The biggest film scenes were shot on "B" film. But, director Bill Smitz served audiences large portions of interesting nature photography shot against natural backdrops of contemporary Chicago.

There was a huge funeral parade with 2,000 mourners marching down Madison Avenue. Selzborn had two cameras looking down from tall buildings and held cameras in the cockpit while a helicopter hovered overhead. It was a dark, rainy morning, perfect for a funeral. The look was elements plus specific of the warm party scene shot on an evening boat ride down the Chicago River. There were coloured party lights on the deck where he shot dialogue and dancing sequences. This director saw the light of Chicago floating in the background.

Selzborn was shooting with three to four combinations of key light with a wide open "f-stop" lens. There's the literal equivalent of multiple control of three or four lenses. That will be the only way Selzborn could hold the background that director Ron Howard wanted the audience to see while

shooting multiple depictions of the stations on the deck. If he increased the intensity of light on the deck it would have overexposed the background. Selzborn says:

It was a little scary and at first, I mastered very carefully. After a while, I learned to trust myself. Learning to do it in this much as later in the learning how to open a new language.

Perhaps no function can impact filmakers but time also gives great latitude. We shot for scenes in a 5,000-watt theatre that was being renovated. There were other scenes in a building which we could pull back and shoot about 1000-watt incandescent lamps or as many as 10 different scenes. That gave us a real sense of depth and a feeling of reality. You can't afford to build those kinds of sets.

This was also the year that Technicolor's Assignment Day lined up 140 productions. Most of the media focus was on the lucrative merging of computer generated synthetic images with live action photography. That's what everyone can remember. But it took incredible location photography by Andrew Deneen, ABC, to give the film its look and the feel of reality.

There was a police night exterior car chase that extended over nearly six miles of the Long Beach Freeway. It was made in one continuous shot involving the use of nine cameras. Deneen used nine generators and every available foot of caulk in Hollywood to power several studio lights and a 100-foot Chinook crane with 120 feet of cable so that, increasing the exposure index to 600, he captured nearly with the 6000 film. That allowed him to put details out of the deepest shadows from total lighting day. The blackouts held true and there was no tell-tale build-up of grain on the screen.

I don't know why certain happens, but it's always wrong for a shot. I can tell it. What makes photography interesting is your willingness to take chances. It's easier today, we have a lot of

tools that didn't exist before. The lighting tools, everything seems changed. Film is another. You can make better use of natural light.

The closing scene was shot in a daily abandoned steel mill. Deneen brought his team to the site with light and colour. The dominant light is the oxygen-rich chemicals of molten steel. There were two melting pots on the floor. Deneen placed mid- and mast-braces with 300 to 400 watts under them. He used three 60-gallon 650-Watt Kelvin lamps to bring in the orange glow. Deneen had the lights on dimmed as he could because a moment later an after. A sheet of plastic wrapped the lights contained water, mixed with white powder and mineral oil, which cooled the bulb, sealing metal dust on fire.

Alan Chaitin, ABC, who earned four Oscar nominations (*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, *The Color Purple*, *Empire of the Sun* and *Avatar*) during the past 12 years, offers some interesting insights.

Everyone is feeling financial pressure, even top level producers and directors. So speed has become important. If you want to locations, and you set the last night shot, you have to move quickly. Otherwise they're not taking. Some need this sort?

How did he feel that the advances in film technology affected the industry during the 1980s? Chaitin says:

When you grow location, location gives, image. And happens. Maybe you are given good natural light. You take the grants and pay and to them. There are a lot more choices today, there are different times with different speeds and other imaging characteristics.

During the glory days of Hollywood, in the 1940s and '50s, every studio had its own light house. All of their contract cinematographers conformed to those styles of lighting and dimensions. Today, it's an individual culture. No two people work exactly alike.

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Trying to sell your services as a film processing and printing laboratory is really like selling water. There is no real difference in the product if the ingredients are maintained, and the prices are set by the market. All the companies advertising can add in a "good feeling" about themselves and services. Bill Hargreaves and Andrew Johnson who run Filmplus seem to have found a real considerable difference and the difference comes up with the value of the ingenuity and staying that way.

I've known Andrew Johnson since he worked at the ABC Film Laboratory more than 20 years ago. Always helpful and never making me a beginning filmmaker feel useless, my film processing business followed him when he and a partner set up Mastercolor nearby in Warrnambool. At one time there were three Mastercolor studios (O'Brien was the third) within a short walk from The Source, the ABC station reversal recording used for all the permanent material and Mastercolor was unaware of. With the years, partnership and changes brought by video, Mastercolor closed and Andrew went to work at NPL where he met Bill Hargreaves.

Bill had worked at Hampshire labs in London where moved to South Africa and worked for Theatricals Century. He went on to Australia and spent over 12 years at VPL. The ability to purchase a

second-hand reversal processing machine and the initiative to expand some of the late night shifts for depths in their own lab, Filmplus opened in Punt Road, situated on the Kilda Junction.

They purchased more reversal, both Mastercolor and Kodak and while at a time when the other labs had the volume on economic. As Bill says, "One lab is about as right." They got stuck big time from around the country and recently there has been demand for black and white reversal from New Zealand. The Kodak machines all have rollers that allow them to handle Super 8 and 16mm, and they have another machine that is used for black-and-white reversal.

By looking after the small filmmakers, the film students, it can then share and with work passed on from the other Melbourne labs they have had enough work to make gradual improvements to the facility. From the beginning, they knew that they would have to involve themselves with video and the client base has led them into film television, NTSC systems conversion and small run duplication. They have a Super VHS edit suite and, like their other services, it is priced for their client base.

If all that sounds too much like a free advertisement, I'll sorry, but I'm sure they can live with the good will. A lot of filmmakers in Melbourne would agree.

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Cannes 1992

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

OUTSIDE COMPETITION

Charlie Countryman, and according to the marché, was Enzo Grecce's *One More Sigh* (*A Simple Story*), based on the last novel of Leonardo Sciascia.

An old lawman is found dead in a near-deserted villa. The charts of the various Sicilian police forces want to call it a suicide, which is clearly not. An amateur inspector decides to keep investigating, assisted by a typically Sicilian professor (Gian Maria Volonté).

Through little dramatic happens in this procedural which uncovers corruption and cover-up (between the mafia and the church to export stolen art treasures), it moves faster than any other film seen at Cannes. To none of the richness of atmosphere and atmosphere one reads in Sciascia's book, though acquaintance with the works of the Sicilian giant would no doubt add to the pleasure.

Volonté, though the film hardly distinguishes, gives a towering performance and one can understand how he won Best Actor at Venice last year.

With glossy but hopelessly simple photography from Renato Dell'Orto, and clever and unshowy direction from Grecce, this film makes an intriguing companion piece to Gianni Amelio's masterful *Open Arms*, also from Sciascia.

Pablo Verenzuela's *Archaeology*, a typically idiosyncratic work from South America (here Chile), presents various time frames, some real, others imagined, to detail the momentous upsurge from a number at the hands of a local death squad.

Verenzuela links various forms of colonial exploitation and repression: the missionaries and Spaniards who destroyed the world of the native of the Chilean archipelago, the death squads' similar reign of terror under Pinochet, and the Japanese exploitation of resources under the gaze of plutocracy.

The storytelling is rapid, often impressionistic and occasionally startling. But the film comes across more as an intellectual game than a story told with passion, surprising since the director has several films to Pinochet's credit.

With *Archaeology* in *Semaine de la Critique* was André Techine's film from Ireland, *Angels*. This simply-told story is quite effective drama about the lives of Ireland's fishermen and those rebellious teenagers who flee home to join them. The lead character is an especially fiery young woman, and the film examines her plight from a quietly effective feminist perspective.

André Techine's *Le Frêneux* (in *marché*) caused a major controversy on its release in France some months ago. It tells of a young garrulous banker from the small village of Lourdes who loves his kooky parents' house in Paris. Finding life very hard there, he rents his family's servants to bring a rent boy.

The boy's tag "mauve" is a mordant expression of inadequacy with a prostitute (Emmanuelle Béart). After her "mauve" brutally repulses him front of her, the boy redresses become even tougher and more cold-hearted. A stint of national service helps him out there.

Like most Techine films, it is only partially successful. The plotting is meandering and obvious, and the perspectives monotone. The film is undeniably gritty, though Philippe Noiret as a television celebrity adds some warmth to a world based on sexual sale.

Jacques Doillon, whose work is strangely like certain Australian, continues a personal film career. Last year was *Le Petit Chaperon*, about a boy kidnapping a joinerwoman and his four-wheeled drive, which closely resembled Eric Rohmer's *Les Fourgs du Moulin* (where a

schoolboy is kidnapped). This year, Doillon returned (in the *marché*) with *Amazzone*, about a young girl kidnapping one girl and two boys (*Il Fuoco e l'Acqua*). It stars Charlène Cornilhac and Yves Afonso (both from *Am Tintor*), and Thérèse Langmann.

Marie lives with Amazzone (Langmann) but spends a day with Eric (Afalon), parting with a kiss. She wants to stay with Amazzone but becomes obsessed with Eric, especially so Amazzone doesn't want a child ("Men only want to have a baby out of weakness. A girl needs no man. That's the wisdom in enough"). She finally gives birth to Eric, causing Amazzone to fuck her passionately in the hope her sperm will distract Eric's.

As usual for Doillon, overall, the camera rarely (and rather dully) recording action speaks. His concentration on close-uped situations is such that there is barely an establishing shot here in the film, and there is no "radiata shot" action between dialogue (just as in *way*).

The style is getting simpler, even purer, but, amazingly so, especially when the images are so sumptuously lit and composed (on what looks like poorly-exposed Super 16). The sound, too, is distinct, the sound editor using out-of-focus noise between words and not laying solid atmosphere. Thus, behind each word is snoring and continuous noise which is not matched when mouths are closed. It makes listening to the endless dialogue rather trying.

All this is surprising in Doillon, with Michel Deville (in an equally droll or dithy) has been one of cinema's top stylists, his cut-gut particular chiseling in *La Redoutable*. Perhaps Doillon is feeling more seriously filtered out.

Doillon's new film, *Tous Peints Comme des Bleus*, with the new French star Patrick Braud, is a real disappointment. The acting is even worse during than usual, the material left out (as in Maurice Pialat's *Van Gogh et Ravan*'s *La Rêve Nouveau*) quite daring. But this police drama of corruption in every echelon of society in the Maine valley is tedious.

Also in the *marché* was Jean-Jacques Annaud's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The English-language adaptation (with a 12-year-old British schoolgirl, Jane March, as the girl) is handsomely designed and shot, but dramatically rather flat. Certainly the attempt to capture the voice, the tone, of Diana doesn't work (the voice-over by Jeannine Matthews is patchily used and hardly evocative). But Annaud's *Handmaid's Tale* (what else could be argued to have got that Diana title correct?) like the novels of Atwood, her work reads as emanative but really isn't.

Le Déserteur has been cruelly treated, banished without comment, and just only in those who feel cynicism has some place in the modern cinema.

Horror of another kind can be found in Abel Ferrara's *The Big Lieutenant*, which quickly gained the reputation as the final, self-tough film (with Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, produced by Monte Hellman). Shown in *Un Certain Regard*, it is a bleak portrait of a seedy New York lieutenant (Harvey Keitel) as he descends into a maelstrom of personal corruption and drug addiction. One scene has him masturbating as a New Yorker, while two young girls he has picked over for a fatty mid-night talk dairy on him. There is also an astonishing onscreen watershed of Keitel being raped by a very blazed-out human soldier.

The lieutenant supplements his police work with drug deals, extortion and gambling. Furthermore he is called in to investigate the sewage rape of a nun, he confronts a living testimony of Christ's impotence and, for a moment, redemption may be his.

It is a particularly gruesome film, Nathan's obsession with heroin

and its effects, sexual violence of particularly sordid kinds, sex-
age and as much swearing as an American director can pack into
90 minutes (and which had several American filmmakers in the
audience shouting like demented schoolboys: "Wow, man, that
Harvey guy knows every way to say 'fuck'!").

All this would be acceptable if it weren't so indulgently handled. Pernell's interesting descent into the right-hander world of the drug user has too much false bravado about it and much too little objectivity. Does a shot of someone shooting up really need the masses of static close-up? Might the audience get the point a little faster?

Worse, for all its obvious excess, the film has no punch at all, which, given the subject, is extraordinary. Pernell showed great technique in his earlier films (particularly *MHS*), but it isn't evident here.

Finally, the most execrable images of *Chains* came not from the big names but from a little-known Indian director, Mehbob (Rangjhan Mehbob). Excerpts from four of his features were selected by the indolent Pernell for aching dramatic compilations. Mehbob's music score, thirty odd minutes, but according to Pernell they became my greatest interest when he became his own producer.

The sequence everyone came out talking about (from *Pernell*) involves the separation of two lovers for reasons of state. An Indian prince stands on the marble surface of his spider palace watching a camel train begin its treacherous journey out across the desert sands. Mehbob builds a hypnotic sequence from the repeated uncoiling of only four shots of the prince, in medium shot and close-up, watching from the terrace, off the camera, his eyes surveying the caravan the sand dunes, and of the young woman in close-up, weeping a wail and holding her grief-bolted-as-impossible expression, as she rocks back and forth in her compartment on top of a camel.

Even without knowledge of the preceding sections of the film, this is an immensely moving sequence. Visually, it is one of the most striking in cinema.

The other scene in the compilation is a late adenovirus rescue among barking fopsticks (Mister India), and a harla scene (from *Asayi* involving elephants and insurance office extras) that puts most Hollywood epics to shame. (The cutting is dazzling in speed and montage effects.)

Another special sequence (from *Amrit*) is between three people involved in a sort of love triangle. A now-married woman meets a man with whom she once had a love relationship some years before. When she meets him again, past feelings well up the surface and she breaks into song. As Pernell has pointed out to the author, in the first Indian movies the characters, especially women, sing because there is no other way of expressing the emotion they feel. There is not the same distinction between dialogue and song that there is in most Hollywood movies.

Surprisingly, this compilation remains remarkable because Mehbob uses the device of a lover being passed from woman to "lover", to husband, to effectively deliver the lyrics through the transitions in the film.

Mehbob is clearly a filmmaker of extraordinary talent. His work would no doubt have passed largely unnoticed if had it not been for Pernell's unearthing it and preserving this living culture. One hopes the compilation can soon find its way to Australian shores.

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PRODUCTION SURVEY

INFORMATION IS CORRECT AND ACCURATE AS OF DECEMBER 2001

NOTE: Production Survey forms were submitted via e-mail. Other reporting method survey information was not included. Blank boxes or if originally checked have been left blank to represent the information.

FEATURES AND PERSONNEL

STAFFING AND STAFFING

Prod. company	PRO Film (St. L)
Principal credits	
Director	George Miller
Producer	David Hartman
Producers	Hollywood Pictures
Line producer	David Hartman
Assoc. producer	Steve Hartman
Exec. producer	Peter Hartman
Supervisors	Lance Polan
DP/Cinematographer	Robert Rodriguez
Editor	James D'Arcy
Editor	Henry Saville
Post. designer	John Papeo
Prod. designer	Rebecca Fife
(See other details supplied)	

THE STAFFING

Prod. company	Village Roadshow
Principal credits	
Director	Brett Ratner
Producer	Patton Oswalt
Co-producers	Melissa Leo
Assoc. producer	Deep Roy
Exec. producer	Michael Giacchino
Line producer	Custom House
Supervisors	Christopher Columbus
DP/Cinematographer	Matthew Libatique
Editor	John C. Scott
Post. designer	John C. Scott
Costume designer	Robert Rosen
Prod. designer	David Hartman
(See other details supplied)	

STAFFING OR STAFFING

Prod. company	Reel 2 Reel (St. L)
Principal credits	
Director	Mike Nichols
Producer	James L. Brooks
Co-producers	Mike Nichols
Assoc. producer	Mike Nichols
Exec. producer	Mike Nichols
Line producer	Mike Nichols
Supervisors	Mike Nichols
DP/Cinematographer	Mike Nichols
Editor	Mike Nichols
Post. designer	Mike Nichols
Costume designer	Mike Nichols
Prod. designer	Mike Nichols
(See other details supplied)	

STAFFING OR STAFFING

STAFFING OR STAFF

EIDOLOCASTIC EIGHT

A PANEL OF EIGHT FILM REVIEWERS HAS RATED A SELECTION OF THE LATEST RELEASES ON A SCALE OF 0 TO 10, THE LATTER BEING THE OPTIMUM RATING (A DASH MORE NOT DESIRED). THE CRITICS ARE: BILL COLLINS (CHANNEL 10); THE DAILY HERALD, SYDNEY; SANDRA HALL (THE EKULLULU, SYDNEY); TRIN HUTCHINSON (SEVEN NETWORK, MELBOURNE); KAREN JAMES (THE AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISING REV. BULLETIN/THE AGE); KAREN MARTIN (BUSINESS WEEKLY, 'BORDEN', 1990); TOM RYAN (10; THE SUNDAY AGE, MELBOURNE); AND EYEN WILLIAMS (THE AUSTRALIAN, SYDNEY).

FILM TITLE	DIRECTOR	COLLINS	HALL	HUTCHINSON	JAMES	MARTIN	RYAN	WILLIAMS	AVG. SCORE
ALIEN 3	David Fincher	7	8	8	7	7	7	7	7.5
AKT 100 AND THE SCRIMPER	Joe Dante	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	8.0
BASIC INSTINCT	Paul Verhoeven	7	1	6	8	3	7	7	4.1
BATMAN RETURNS	Tim Burton	7	8	8	8	7	7	7	7.8
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	John Gielgud	9	8	8	8	8	7	7	8.0
BILLY SATURATE	Robert Bresson	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	8.0
BLACK HARVEST	Robin Anderson, Bob Connolly	7	7	7	7	10	7	7	7
CITY OF HOPE	John Sayles	7	7	9	7	8	8	7	7.8
CITY OF JOY	Roland Joffé	7	7	8	8	7	7	7	7.5
EUROPA	[directors] Agnieszka Holland	9	7	7	8	8	8	8	7.8
FAR AND AWAY	Ron Howard	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	7.8
THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE	Carrie Fisher	8	7	8	8	7	7	7	7.8
HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER	John McNaughton	7	7	8	8	8	8	7	7.8
HOWARDS END	James Ivory	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8.0
IN THE SHADOWS OF THE STARS	Irrfan Khan, Alia Bhatt	7	7	8	7	7	7	7	7
JAVA HAS TWO LONERS	Rashid Shah	7	4	8	7	8	8	8	7.5
THE LAWMOWER MAN	Brett Leonard	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	7.8
THE MAN WHO KILLED	Eric Clapton	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	7.8
MEMORIES OF AN INVISIBLE MAN	John Carpenter	7	7	8	8	8	8	7	7.8
NAMED LUNCH	David Cronenberg	7	7	8	7	7	8	7	7.8
PEOPLE UNDER THE STARS	Vivienne	7	7	8	8	7	8	7	7
THE PLAYER	Robert Altman	7	8	8	7	8	8	8	7.8
SHADING THROUGH	David Selby	7	7	8	8	7	8	7	7.8

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ON FILM

"I don't usually create the look of the films I shoot. That's a collaboration of everyone's gifts. I work from the gut rather than by the book. Every film has its own heart and soul, and has to be approached differently, and I am constantly stretching and breaking the rules and learning how to create new ones. There needs to be a plan, but I don't like to impose unnecessary restrictions on the cast and director because great things can happen spontaneously, and my job is to capture those moments on film."

Dean Semler

Semler's credits include "Rounders," "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome," "48 Hrs.," "The Young Lions," "The Young Rascals," "Royal Cinema," and "Cinema Verite."

